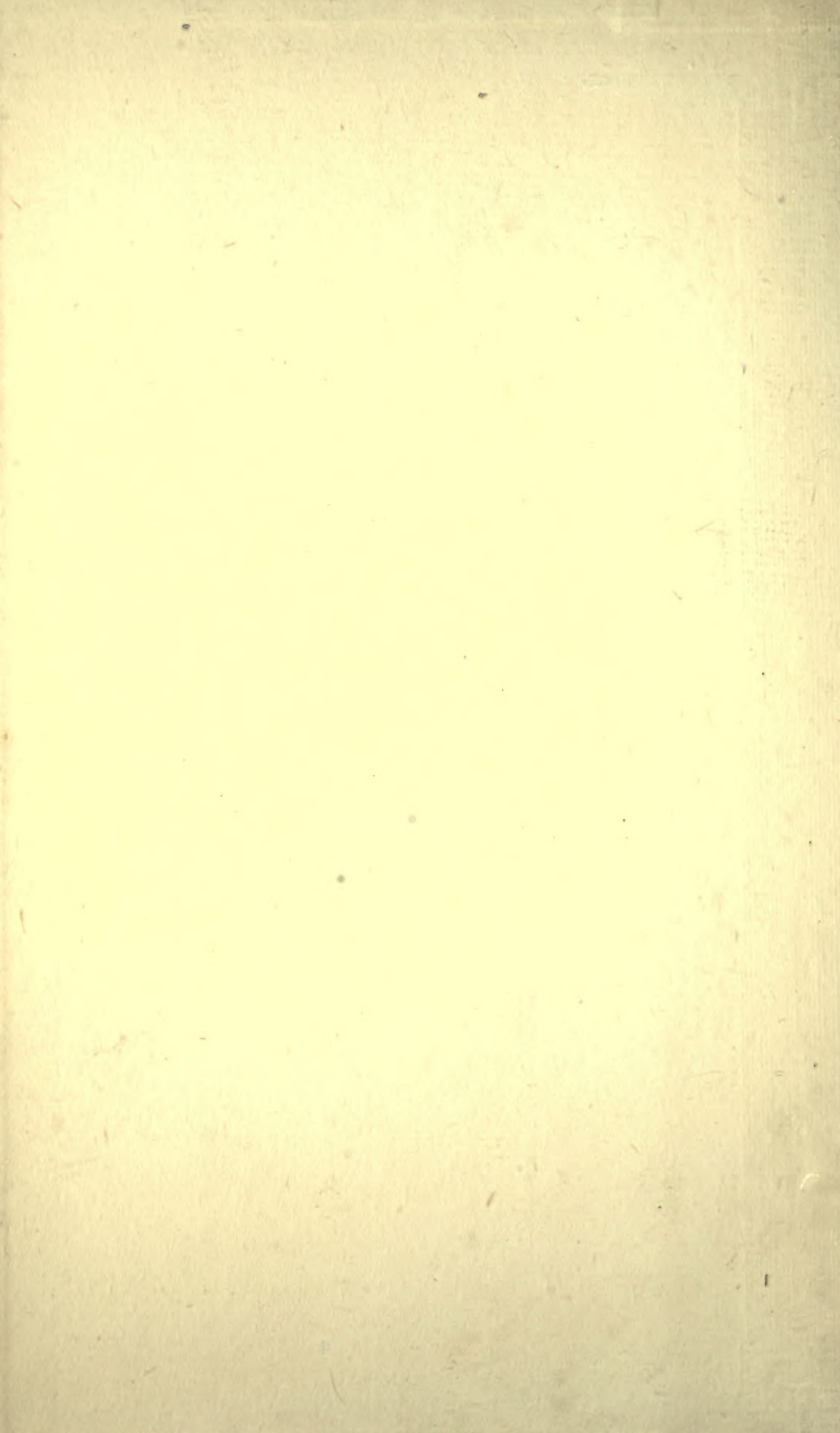


SAINTES AND
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1351-1352





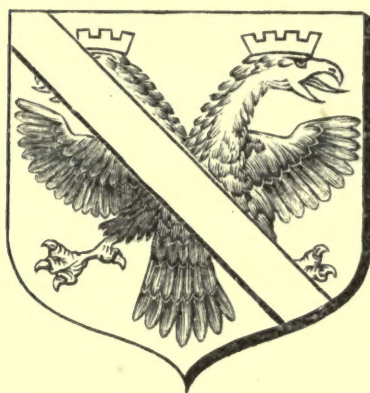


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A BRIEF
NOTE UPON THE
BATTLES OF
SAINTES AND MAURON

1351—1352

DU GUESCLIN



A BRIEF
NOTE UPON THE
BATTLES OF SAINTES
AND MAURON
1351 AND 1352



*“Edward the Third conquered both before his face and behind his back,
whence he came and whither he went, North and South, one in his person,
the other in his substitutes in his absence.”*

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NOTE

*The first Battle of Saintes, in which Simon
de Montfort took part, was fought on
July 22, 1242.*

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SOME EVENTS IN THE REIGN OF KING

EDWARD III

1327-1377

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1333. The Scots defeated at Halidon Hill. | 1341. Royal dispute with the Archbishop of Canterbury at Westminster. |
| 1337. The Taking of Cadsant Island. | 1341. Nantes captured by the English. |
| 1339-42. Southampton, Portsmouth, and Plymouth are plundered by the French. | 1342. Battle of Morlaix. |
| 1340. The Naval Victory at Sluis. | 1342. Brest occupied by the English. |
| 1340. The Siege of Tournai. | 1342. The Siege of Hennebont. |
| 1346. The Battle of Crécy. | 1342. Attempted Relief of Vannes. |
| 1346. The War in Guienne. | 1343. Olivier de Clisson decapitated. |
| 1346. The Scots defeated at Durham (Nevill's Cross). | 1345. Charles of Blois defeated. |
| 1347. The Capture of Calais. | 1347. Battle of La Roche Derien. |
| 1348. The Pestilence, or "The Black Death." | 1350. Sir Thos. Dagworth slain. |
| 1350. The Naval Victory off Winchelsea. | 1351. The (second) Battle of Saintes. |
| 1355. King Edward captures Edinburgh. | 1351. The Combat of the Thirty. |
| 1356. The Battle of Poitiers (or Maupertuis). | 1352. The Battle of Mauron. |
| 1358. Death of the Queen Mother. | 1354. Calveley's unfortunate engagement at Montmuran. |
| 1360. The Treaty of Bretigni. | 1357. The Siege of Rennes. |
| | 1359. The deaths of Sir Walter and Lady Bentley. |
| | 1364. The Battle of Auray and death of Charles of Blois. |

ENGLISH GOVERNORS OF BRITTANY

1342. WILLIAM DE BOHUN, EARL OF NORTHAMPTON*
(Reappointed 1345, *April 24.*)
- 1346-7. *January 10.* SIR THOMAS DAGWORTH †
1350. *September 12.* SIR WALTER BENTLEY
1353. *April 4.* SIR JOHN AVESNEL ‡
1354. { ADMIRAL SIR ROBERT HERLE } Temporarily and
{ JOHN DE BUCKINGHAM § } Jointly.
- 1354-5. *March 18.* SIR THOMAS HOLAND, EARL OF KENT *
1355. *September 14.* HENRY, DUKE OF LANCASTER * ||
1356. WILLIAM, LORD LATYMER, K.G. ¶
1357. HENRY, DUKE OF LANCASTER * ||
- 1358-9. *August 8.* ADMIRAL SIR ROBERT HERLE **
1360. *December 8.* WILLIAM, LORD LATYMER, K.G. ¶

* The three persons so indicated above were relatives of the King of England.

† The Countess of Ormonde (widow of Sir Thomas Dagworth) acted for a brief time as Deputy Viceroy after her husband's murder (see p. 5).

‡ For some account of Sir John Avesnel, see a note upon p. 43.

§ John de Buckingham was Keeper of the King's Privy Seal and was subsequently made Bishop of Lincoln.

Probably he was not actually present in Brittany at the time and Sir Robert Herle acted on the spot.

|| The Duke of Lancaster was also Earl of Derby, of Leicester, and of Lincoln.

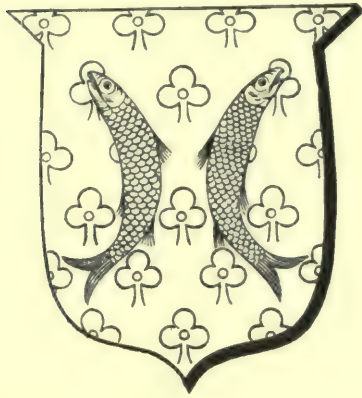
¶ Lord Latymer was subsequently impeached by the Commons for his ill-conduct while in Brittany.

** Some account of Admiral Sir Robert Herle will be found in Sir Harris Nicholas's *History of the British Navy*, vol. ii., pp. 249-250.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
EVENTS IN THE REIGN OF EDWARD III. - -	v
ENGLISH GOVERNORS OF BRITTANY - -	vi
INTRODUCTORY : THE ATTACK ON VANNES - -	1
THE BATTLE OF SAINTES - -	11
THE BATTLE OF MAURON - -	23
AFTER MAURON - -	39
APPENDIX A : THE LADY OF CLISSON - -	
APPENDIX B : SIR WALTER BENTLEY - -	53
APPENDIX C : PROPERTY OF SIR WALTER BENTLEY -	55
SOME AUTHORITIES CONSULTED - -	59
INDEX OF PERSONS - -	61
INDEX OF PLACES - -	65

DE NESLE



A NOTE UPON THE BATTLES OF SAINTES AND MAURON

*"Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro."*

HOR.: *Odes*, IV., iv.

I

IT will be remembered that, almost at the outset of The Hundred Years' War between England and France, Edward the Third, while endeavouring to force a way into the central provinces of France from its Northern frontier, seized the opportunity of a disputed succession to the Dukedom of Brittany to obtain a foothold in the North-West also by espousing the cause of one of the rival claimants to that Duchy, John, Count of Montfort.

In those days the outpour of the young adventurous life of this island, the Crusaders excepted, went across the narrow seas only. Big vessels and the advent of steam had not as yet removed the limitations of transport, and France, the Low Countries, Ireland, or Scotland then took the place in the expansion of England which was later occupied by India, Africa, America, or Australia. The tie with France was an especially close one, and on the West side, since the days of Henry the Second, Aquitaine had been an English province. The Dukes of Brittany, too, maintained a close connection with

Introductory

with this country, and had a residence also in London,* while the wine ships of Gascony, and salt-laden vessels of Poitou, filled our Southern ports.

After several years' campaigning in the West, and many hard-fought engagements (including the historic relief of Hennebont), the English King, by the help of some of the ablest soldiers in his army—Northampton, Manny, Dagworth, etc.—and of their Breton colleagues, was able to establish his ascendancy in the Duchy, and in Poitou, and thus became—Gascony being already under English government—master of the Atlantic provinces of France from Bordeaux to Brest. In 1347 Sir Thomas Dagworth, a brother-in-law of the gallant Earl of Northampton, and himself a successful commander, was appointed by King Edward Governor-General of Brittany.

Rivalling the defender of Hennebont ("the heroic Countess of Montfort"), another very remarkable woman existed at this time—the youthful widow of a Breton noble, the Sieur de Clisson (who, suspected of having secretly connived at the giving up of Nantes to the English, had been seized when in Paris, and executed by Philip of France without any formal trial, in 1343). In reprisal for her husband's tragic death, Jeanne of Clisson, hitherto a shy and timid girl, levied war upon the French, and, when at last obliged to retire before superior numbers, after many extraordinary adventures, both on shore and at sea, landed (after being shipwrecked) at Morlaix with one son destined to

* The Dukes of Brittany for a long period kept up a residence in London (in preference to Paris) which was situated in the neighbourhood of Aldersgate Street, at

that time "the Park Lane of London"—and to this day the spot is commemorated by its name of "Little Britain."

become

Jeanne of Clisson

become in after-life celebrated in history. The other boy had died from the privations endured on the voyage.

Not only a great heiress, Jeanne of Belleville and Clisson* was one of the most beautiful women of her day, and her heroism excited the admiration of all at the English and Breton Courts. Many aspired to become the protector of the Lady of Clisson.

Prominent amongst the leaders of the British army of occupation in Brittany was at this time Sir Walter Bentley, of Beverley,† a hard-fighting and active soldier of many campaigns. It is not then perhaps surprising that the Yorkshireman, who has been described by a French writer as a “banneret‡ pauvre, mais d’une caractère aventureux et entreprenant,” should have fallen under the spell of Jeanne’s courage and charms, and, combining love and war, courted and married the intrepid Amazon. As in the courtship of a distinguished soldier three centuries later—the great Duke of Marlborough—the *exact* date of Jeanne’s marriage is not to be found, but it took place in 1348-9.

The English King’s Lieutenant in the adjoining province of Poitou was at this period Ralph of Cahors, a man of mean birth, and a native of a village near Montfort (which happened accidentally to be of the same name as that of the cathedral city in the South).

* See Appendix A, p. 51.

† See Appendix B, p. 53.

‡ “Banneret, a knight, who, for good service under the Royal Banner, was advanced by the King to a higher order of knighthood *on the field of battle*. From that time he would be entitled to bear, and would be distinguished by, a banner, instead of by a pennon.” Boutell’s *Heraldry*, 1864 edition,

p. 93. “The banner was borne by Knights Bannerets, who ranked higher than the Knights of the Medieval Chivalry, and also by Barons, Princes, and Sovereigns themselves.” *Ibid.*, p. 287. Bannerets in the time of Edward III. had a military rank equivalent to Brigadier-Generals of Cavalry. See the *Le Strange Records*, by Hamon le Strange, F.S.A., p. 314.

King

Introductory

King Edward had already bestowed upon Bentley, in reward of his distinguished services in Brittany and elsewhere, the important island of Noirmoutiers on the Atlantic coast,* and also the rich salt-producing tracts on the mainland fringing the Bay of Bourgneuf† (from which locality the term of "bay salt" is to this day derived)—and to these were now added the superb castle and lands of Clisson in Poitou and the shipping dues of the port of Bordeaux, held in right of his wife.

The jealousy of Cahors, who had long hankered after some of these rich possessions, was inflamed, and a violent and prolonged dispute took place between him and Bentley which reached such a pitch of animosity in the summer of 1349, that the King himself intervened, and temporarily assuaged the controversy by granting an increased annual subsidy to Cahors. The French monarch, however, correctly gauging the despicable character of Ralph, bought him over secretly by still larger offers both of land and of money, and included with these the promise of the valuable salt deposits just mentioned. Some of his actions continuing to arouse suspicion of his good faith, Ralph, in consequence of a report made by Bentley to King Edward, was about to be superseded in his command by the Count of Lancaster‡—but too late to avert mischief!

Cahors, still outwardly loyal, and even during a time of truce§ with the French, succeeded in entrapping

* See Appendix C, p. 55.

† The monopoly of the supply of salt was jealously guarded, and Rymer refers to an order of King Edward made in 1349, decreeing that no one should purchase salt at "The Bay" or elsewhere in

Poitou, except from the Captain of that province.

‡ Created Duke of Lancaster in 1351.

§ The first truce arranged between the combatants, that of Malestroit, was to last three years,

the

The Murder of Dagworth

the Viceroy of Brittany, when at the head of a small retinue, in an ambush near Auray* in the summer of 1350. Though taken in peace time by surprise, Sir Thomas Dagworth (whose services have strangely escaped record in the Dictionary of National Biography) † long held out against desperate odds. Fighting like a gallant soldier at bay, he was at last overpowered by numbers, surrounded, and after being no less than six times wounded, struck down, and killed. Deprived of its administrator by this foul act of treachery, the control of the Duchy was temporarily undertaken—until a successor could be appointed—by Eleanor, the high-spirited widow of Dagworth (who was Countess of Ormonde in her own right); but the British forces were not to be long left without a leader in the field.

The treason of Cahors, and the base manner in which the illustrious Dagworth had been surprised by a colleague in a time of peace, aroused the greatest indig-

from January 19, 1343, but was denounced in less than a year, after being broken by the arrest and execution of Olivier de Clisson. The second truce, for six months only, originally from September 28, 1347, was prolonged in successive instalments to nearly three years, when it was interrupted by the murder of Sir Thomas Dagworth.

On each occasion the truces were terminated by a crime committed on the enemy's side.

While on this subject it may be useful to add that the Twenty Years' Truce with Spain, freeing the seas, ran from August 1, 1351.

* Though a small place, Auray

was one of unfortunate associations. Charles of Blois was killed in a battle there in 1364, and it was also the scene of a massacre of Royalists by General Hoche in 1795.

† Comparatively little attention has been bestowed by English historians upon this picturesque and adventurous period—upon the important political and military administration of the English Governors at Bordeaux for close upon two centuries—or upon the Viceroys during the English occupation of Brittany, though the post was held by many men of considerable distinction.

nation

Introductory

nation throughout England,* and a new Viceroy, with extended powers, and fresh levies of troops were immediately decreed by the English King, but owing to the great pestilence of the previous year—the so-called “Black Death”†—comparatively few men were forthcoming to augment the too scanty garrison then in Brittany.

Edward the Third throughout his long career had an instinctive discernment of vigour and capacity, and a keen intuition for aptitude in all his appointments for the service of the State. At so critical a juncture no untried man had any chance for the post. Hence the restoration and maintenance of the English supremacy in Western France was entrusted to Sir Walter Bentley, who had taken part in many campaigns, and who for several years had already some share in the military administration of the Duchy. Whether he had been present, like Sir Walter Manny, in the earlier Scottish wars, or in the expeditions to Flanders and Northern France, need not detain us now. “Gautier de Benthelée,” says La Fontenelle de Vaudoré, “posédant de plus en plus la confiance d’Edouard fut

* And not less so in Brittany. Sir Richard Bemborough, a stern commander, a great personal friend as well as colleague of Sir Thomas Dagworth, was at the time of the outrage Governor of Ploërmel, and immediately news of the untoward event reached him, responded by the severest reprisals upon all the surrounding country. Carried out promptly and with great vigour, these provoked in consequence a challenge from the French commander de Beau-

manoir to a personal encounter. On being accepted, the historic meeting at Mi-voie (the Combat of Thirty a Side) was arranged in 1351, in which a son of Dagworth (afterwards Sir Nicholas Dagworth) took a part. See some further reference to the occasion in a footnote on p. 32, and in other footnotes on pp. 9 and 10, also p. 34; fuller particulars will be found too in *Archæologia*, vol. vi.

† See a footnote regarding this on p. 19.

nommé

Bentley Appointed Viceroy

nommé par lui Lieutenant-Général en Bretagne et Bas Poitou."

It was an eventful time, and on the 29th of August, 1350, King Edward ("in a black velvet jacket, and a black beaver hat which well became him"), with the "Black Prince," little Prince John of Ghent, the Earl of Lancaster, Sir Walter Manny, and many generals and knights gained the great sea-fight off Winchelsea—over the Spanish Fleet under La Cerda. The king remained at Winchelsea for a few days after his victory, and then went to Sandwich. Thus Bentley's appointment as King's Lieutenant in Brittany, and also part of Poitou, was dated from the Cinque Port of Sandwich on the 8th of September, 1350, and was followed, four days later, by a grant from the King (who had then moved on to Hertford) of all the revenues of Brittany, whether pertaining to the King or to the Duke. "All Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Priors, Dukes, Marquises, Counts, and Barons," were enjoined to render obedience to the behests of the new Viceroy.

Sir Walter succeeded the Earl of Northampton, and Sir Thomas Dagworth, as the third Viceroy of Brittany in the autumn of 1350. Short as Bentley's occupation of that office was—but three years—it was made brilliant by the events crowded into it, owing to the unceasing efforts of the French King to recover his hold upon Brittany and Poitou. The new English ruler had fought with the gallant de Beaumanoir, he had also battled with Bertrand du Guesclin, the rising champion of France. Fortune smiled upon his efforts. To have defeated many of the most redoubtable Marshals of France (and among them DE NESLE, BERTRAM, d'ENDREGHEM, and HANGEST), showed no mean
ability

Introductory

ability on Bentley's part. In 1351 the recently appointed Viceroy, even before he had time to perfect his military organization, vanquished the enemy at SAINTES in the South, made the French Commander-in-Chief prisoner, and gained possession of several important fortresses; and in the year following, 1352, despite the scantiness of the forces provided for him, besides raising the siege of Fougères, he again, in the face of great odds, defeated the French, and after a desperate battle at MAURON in the North, killed the enemy's Commander-in-Chief and most of his staff, put his forces to the rout, and avenged also the treason of Ralph of Cahors.

Bentley at the time of his appointment was still in the prime of life and vigour, and was already known as a man of great military capacity* as well as being a capable and fertile organizer. Some years had elapsed since he had been the leader in a dashing exploit when the castle and harbour of VANNES was besieged and hard pressed by the enemy in 1342.† Bentley happened at that time to be stationed with a detachment to guard the town and castle of Ploërmel,‡ some considerable distance away, and (according to the historian, d'Argentré) was chafing at the inactivity of garrison duty when news reached him of the beleaguering of Vannes. Without losing an hour, he selected the best mounted of his men, and taking with him two young fellows, whose pluck and energy could be relied

* "Miles egregius," as Walsingham terms him in his Chronicles.

† Edward Despencer (father of the fighting Bishop of Norwich) was one of those killed at Vannes in 1342.

‡ Mazas overstates the number of troops with Bentley, which he puts at 3,000 men, evidently including with them a part at Rennes.

The Attack on Vannes

upon, as lieutenants, Calveley* and Knolles,† he attempted a diversion to embarrass the investing force.

Leaving Malestroit on the left Bentley made a forced march of thirty miles across country over the hilly Lanvaux until he approached the castle of Elven, where in after years Henry of Richmond (Henry VII. of England) spent so large a portion of his life. With a force fully armed, and carrying also food for horse and man, it was a fatiguing progress over rough ground, and a brief halt was necessary for rest, and to allow stragglers to come up in the twilight. The French, who had never anticipated being struck at from such a distance, had no outposts or vedettes‡ towards Ploërmel, and Bentley's movement was so timed that the attacking force should arrive, unseen, in proximity of the enemy after nightfall. The English, approaching quietly within distance, suddenly charged home, with loud shouting, out of the darkness of the moonless night, into the troops of the Comte de Melun, scattered in their bivouacs. The partisans of Charles of Blois,

* Sir Hugh Calveley, and a most distinguished commander later. Both Calveley and Knolles subsequently took part in "The Combat of the Thirty."

† Afterwards the celebrated Sir Robert Knolles, Leader of Free Lances. Knolles served under Bentley at the Battle of Mauron. He was Governor of Brest in 1373, and was present with the young King Richard at the death of Wat Tyler, in 1381.

‡ Reconnoitring or outpost work was not systematically carried out in those days. Notice,

for example, a few years later the movements which immediately preceded the Battle of Poitiers, when the "Black Prince," desirous of avoiding battle with the superior forces of King John, turned aside on his march, and the French army swept past his own. Each commander was unaware of the position of the other until an accidental meeting of a portion of the rear guard of the French with some stragglers of the English forces disclosed to King John that the army which he supposed to be in *front* of him was actually in his *rear*.

thus

Introductory

thus taken by surprise, were thrown into the greatest confusion, and a panic ensued for some time in their camp, until order was at length restored by the gallantry of one man, a young knight, hereafter to become famous, Bertrand du Guesclin. Bentley's slender force then re-formed as best it could by night, and drew off before the dawn revealed its scanty numbers, returning worn out, and with many empty saddles, over the hills again to Ploërmel. The Vicomte de Rohan, an expert witness on the enemy's side, said he did not know which the most to admire—the skill and daring of the English attack, or the valour and cool resolution of young du Guesclin.*

Five years before becoming Viceroy, Bentley had, too, been chosen by King Edward, in Sir Thomas Dagworth's time, to assist in maintaining order in the Duchy and in suppressing certain disturbances and movements which were hostile to the English rule in Brittany. French intrigue was very busy, and for a long time the country had been the prey of faction and the fighting ground of partisans. Few of these emulated the loyalty of Captain Croquart, a celebrated and wealthy freebooter,† who was proof throughout his adventurous career against all attempts made by the French to buy him over.

* Bertrand du Guesclin, in after-life Constable of France, was born at Motte Broon about 1320. Though in early years several times defeated and captured by the English, he became one of their most redoubtable foes, and won back from them a large part of France. In the Cathedral of St. Sauveur at Dinan, candles have

been kept burning for over five centuries in front of the jewelled casket which contains his heart.

† See Barnes's *Life of Edward III.* (year 1349). Captain Croquart took part in the "Combat of the Thirty." According to Froissart he began his career as a poor page boy.

The Naval Blockade

II

THE opportunity of Bentley's appointment as King's Lieutenant was taken to place the existing arrangements for the government of Brittany (most of which had grown up provisionally, or by degrees, during the progress of the war), upon a more regular and permanent footing. One of the new Governor's earliest efforts, a carefully digested scheme for the redistribution of the Anglo-Breton forces, and for the better equipment of the English strongholds in Brittany, still exists in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. Among many military improvements he introduced a stricter discipline and forbade pillage, and to prevent excesses by his men on the plea of short allowance he prevailed upon the King to increase the pay of his troops, which was already, judged by modern standards, fairly high. The soldiers of Edward the Third were, in fact, paid twice the wage of civil labourers.*

A very formidable obstacle hampered all maritime intercourse with the Duchy at this time, dangerous alike to ships with merchandise or ships with soldiery coming from England, viz., the hostile fleet of Don Louis de la Cerda, constantly hovering off the Breton coasts. It is extraordinary, remarks Sir Harris Nicolas, that, in less than three years after the great sea victory of 1340 at Sluis, England should not have a fleet at

* See the *History of the British Army*, by Sir S. D. Scott, vol. i., p. 271.

The Battle of Saintes

sea capable of coping with the Spanish and Genoese squadrons, which appear at this period to have obtained an almost undisputed command of the Narrow Seas.* At one time the enemy had eight huge galleys, thirteen barges, and thirty other ships cruising between England and Brittany, to intercept vessels bringing provisions across to the English army. The Spanish fleet even landed troops at points both in Brittany and in Gascony earlier in the war, so it became necessary to keep an always watchful eye upon the coast.†

As an able Governor, Bentley did not confine his activity solely to military concerns even at that critical time, and his administration, says a French chronicler, “fut signalée par un redoublement d’exploitation mercantile du Duché,” which had suffered greatly from the vicissitudes of the long war. He kept, too, a watchful eye upon the Courts of Justice, and many pardons granted by the King at his request testify to a merciful disposition, when any circumstances arose to warrant his intervention.

Bentley was not long allowed to address himself to the domestic affairs of the Duchy.‡ Taking advantage of the defection of Ralph of Cahors, and the confusion temporarily caused by it, the French monarch planned, in the spring of 1351, an invasion of Poitou, and succeeded in overrunning in force Saintonge and the surrounding territories, with the intention of gaining entrance into Brittany from the South. This formid-

* *History of the British Navy*, vol. i., p. 81.

† For the sea-battle off Winchelsea, which led to a truce being arrived at with Spain, see p. 7.

‡ “Le Roi d’Angleterre lui

(Gautier de Bentelée) laissa la disposition des revenus du Duché sans l’obliger à en rendre aucun compte.” Morice, *History of Brittany*.

The Invasion of Saintonge

able scheme was carried out with great skill and rapidity by the French commander, and the outlying English forces, attacked in succession before they had time to unite, were overmatched and steadily driven backward from point to point towards the coast. Messengers rode north and south, bearing urgent messages asking for help. In the interval it was determined to make a stand round the fortress of St. Jean d'Angely, an important place of arms on the banks of the Charente, and covering the line of retirement, should it become necessary, to Rochefort. Accompanying the French Commander-in-Chief was Sir Arnoul d'Endreghem, the recently appointed Captain-General of Angoulême,* himself a soldier of the highest ability, and who brought with him a considerable accession of force.

When the first tidings of the impending invasion of Saintonge, and the gathering of French troops on the borders of the province,† reached King Edward, Sir John Beauchamp, lately Governor of Calais, was hurriedly despatched into Gascony to organize immediate measures of defence. He had hardly landed at Bordeaux when accounts reached him almost daily from one quarter or another of the increasing headway made

* Sir Arnoul d'Endreghem had been captured by the English in 1346 at Calais, and had been subsequently released. In recognition of his gallant conduct at the Battle of Saintes, in 1351, he was created in June of that year a Marshal of France, and on March 6, 1352, he was designated the French King's Lieutenant in Poitou, Saintonge, Limousin, Angoumois, Perigord, and of all the country

between the Loire and the Dordogne. In 1353, d'Endreghem was appointed the French King's Lieutenant in Normandy. He died in 1370.

† The difficulty of assembling troops in large bodies, and of keeping them collected together in feudal times, is well illustrated in General Hamley's *Operations of War*, chap. 2.

by

The Battle of Saintes

by the enemy. Rendered anxious by the rapidity of the French advance, Sir John hastened into the field every available man who could be spared from Bordeaux, and this force was augmented when on the march by further Gascon levies enrolled by the Seigneur d'Albret and the Seigneur de Mussidan. Sir Walter Bentley, on his side, brought up also all the archers, hobelers, and pikemen, which he could collect at short notice in Poitou. The two forces effected a junction not far from the coast, and pushed forward into the interior, to the relief of the hard-pressed English near St. Jean d'Angely.

The ancient Roman city of Saintes,* which is situated in the heart of the Cognac district, had been invested by the enemy in the course of his advance, and in its vicinity, not far from the old battle-ground on which Henry III. (and his brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort) had fought more than a hundred years previously, the opposing armies at length came into view on the 8th of April, 1351.† The French were in considerably superior force,‡ and were led by a commander

* In earlier times Mediolanum. A Roman triumphal arch, and the ruins of an amphitheatre, and of a circus, still exist there.

† Some chroniclers give the date of this battle as April 1, and others as April 23, 1351.

‡ It will be observed that the English forces were successful in each case against superior numbers—whether at Crécy, Saintes, Maunon, Poitiers, or Agincourt. This was largely due to their coolness and superiority in shooting, which was very effective up to

two hundred yards, and extended (less powerfully) even up to three hundred yards. The discharge of arrows (each archer was equipped with two dozen, stood with their points in the ground in front of him), was quite as rapid with trained men as the fire would be from a muzzle-loading rifle. The long-bow men drew the cord taut to the tip of the ear, the short-bow men to the chest only. The long-bow men are understood to have originated in South Wales, and their constant training in the Scot-

of

The English Archers

of high distinction and proved valour, the Field-Marshal de Nesle.*

When the English ascertained that the enemy was within range they at once dismounted to make their aim more sure, and proceeded to draw up their men in order of battle. M. de Nesle ordered his troops to follow this example,† with exception of two bodies which he reserved for a special purpose. He stationed one of these mounted squadrons on either flank of his battle array.‡ The Marshal did not hurry over his

tish Wars stood them in good stead when brought over to France.

As Drayton says in his *Agincourt* :—

“ With Spanish yew so strong,
Arrows a cloth yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
Piercing the leather.
None from his fellows starts,
But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts,
Stuck close together.”

Grose states that the price of equipment used to be, *temp.* Edward III. (and due regard must be had to the higher value of money at that period)—for archers: a painted bow, 1s. 6d.; a white bow, 1s.; for a sheaf (24) of arrows *aceratu*, 1s. 2d.; or the arrows *not* steel-tipped, 1s. a sheaf. The archer himself drew 3d. a day for his pay.

* Sir Gui de Nesle belonged to the noble family of Clermont. He was Seigneur d'Offemont, and Seigneur de Mello, and was “Souverain” in the districts of Artois, and in the Boulonnais.

(Nesle, from which the veteran soldier took his name, is a small town in Picardy, situated not very far from Péronne.) De Nesle was created a Marshal of France in 1345, and was appointed Captain-General and “Souverain” in Saintonge on August 9, 1349, and in 1352, Governor-General of Brittany.

The Marshal de Nesle was twice married. On May 23, 1342, he espoused Jeanne, daughter of the Seigneur de Bruyères, by whom he had two sons and two daughters. After her death he married again, in 1351, Isabel, daughter of the Vicomte de Thoulars. (She herself subsequently remarried, wedding the Seigneur d'Amboise.)

† In the reign of King John II. each French man-at-arms was accompanied by four followers, viz., by two squires and by two “castiliers.”

‡ According to Froissart, the French had their ranks too widely spaced apart, which permitted their opponents to burst through them, and attack them afresh from the arrangements,

The Battle of Saintes

arrangements, possibly being desirous in the meantime of making himself better acquainted with the ground, or of ascertaining his enemy's dispositions, or, as some authorities say, of giving a breathing interval to his men after a long ride.* This delay, which was considerable, was most fortunate for the English, to whom every moment was precious, as it allowed time for them to bring up to their assistance by a forced march the neighbouring garrisons of Fonnay-sur-Charente and of Taillebourg—a doubly valuable reinforcement which decided the issue of the coming battle.

The spot where the hostile forces met was near the chapel of St. George (now probably the locality known as St. Georges la Valade), according to the *Chronique Normande*.

“The Lord Gui de Nesle, Marshal of France,” says Dr. Barnes, in his *History of Edward the Third*, “was at last met with by Sir Walter Bentley, who, with Edmond Rous (a Norfolk man, and Captain of the Castle of St. Jean d’Angely), and with but six hundred men encount’red him valiantly, and had such success that he slew or routed the whole body of them, and took prisoners Sir Gui de Nesle himself, and Sir Arnoul d’Endreghem (another and very famous Marshal of France subsequently), and the Lord William Nesle (the brother of Sir Gui, himself a valiant soldier, and who lost his life a few years later on the battlefield of Poitiers), Regnault de Pons (who became subsequently an important member of the Government), Jean de

rear, much in the same manner as Admiral Nelson’s fleet manœuvred at the Battle of the Nile.

* A very possible reason was to

bring up additional men from Saintes to strengthen the line of battle.

Saintré,

Sir Guichard d'Angle

Saintré, Guichard d'Angle (the Maréchal de Saintonge),* some other French nobles, and six knights of quality, and a hundred and forty esquires and gentlemen."

After this hotly fought contest the remnants of the discomfited French forces, thus left without leaders and in sorry plight, fell back in great confusion in the direction of Saintes, and out of reach of the pursuing English. As soon as he was informed of the disaster which had befallen his arms, the King of France tendered a large ransom of ten thousand *écus* for the release of the Marshal de Nesle. Immediately he had disposed of his prisoners and rested his troops, Bentley, pursuing the campaign, then succeeded in obtaining possession of Château Gonthier, Varades, and Blein, in the South, and of the fortresses of Fougeray (le Grand), Redon, and Vannes in the North; and he entrusted Fougeray† (recaptured from the French on May 12), to the keeping of a sturdy lieutenant of archers, who was destined to be in after-years a terror to the French, and who subsequently won great renown as Sir Robert Knolles, and whom we shall meet with shortly on the battlefield of Mauron.

* Sir Guichard d'Angle, who was born about 1323, was a chivalrous knight held in high esteem in both armies. After fighting strenuously against us at Poitiers, he was permitted by King John, who appreciated the nobility of his personal character, to transfer his allegiance to King Edward, knowing that he would never become the enemy of France. D'Angle afterwards did good service fighting on the English side in Spain, where he acted as Marshal to

Edward "the Black Prince." Winning his regard also he was subsequently appointed Governor to his son Richard, Prince of Wales (afterwards King of England). Sir Guichard was made one of the Knights of the Order of the Garter by King Edward, and was created Earl of Huntingdon in 1377. He died in England, much honoured, in 1380.

† Fougeray (between Rennes and Nantes) was retaken by the French under du Guesclin in 1356.

With

The Battle of Saintes

With a foresight born of long experience, and aware of the slenderness of his resources for the protection of so large an area, the Governor of Brittany did his best to set his house in order* for the still greater conflict which he anticipated might come in the following year, and upon the issue of which he knew the existence of the English rule in Western France depended; and at the first opportunity he crossed the sea to England to interview the King, and to ask for a larger and more adequate establishment of troops for the safeguarding of the Duchy. King Edward recognized the shortcomings and disadvantages of the military situation in Brittany, but while fully realizing these he was also confronted by heavy and pressing demands made upon his resources from other theatres of action. It should be kept in mind that the entire population of England and Wales at this time was less than the population of London alone is at the present day. The King spared no effort, however, to send out at the earliest moment practicable some reinforcements to the Duchy, but the reserve of men-at-arms, and of trained bowmen especially, had been depleted by the constant drafts made upon them owing to the incessant warfare both in other parts of France, and on the Scottish borders. It was exceedingly difficult, too, to replenish their strength, owing to the ravages of the Black Death lately sweeping over Europe,† and also to the poverty of the Royal Ex-

* Some minor matters also claimed the Viceroy's attention at this time, such as the premature removal of prisoners from Brittany before their ransoms had been received; and the prosecution of Sir Amaneus of Cheshunt, who

had received the King's pay to proceed to Brittany (probably with a squadron of horse), but who did not put in an appearance across the sea.

† This pestilence was at its height in 1348-49, and largely
chequer

The Black Death

chequer. War upon several fronts at the same time had exhausted all the supplies derived from a heavy taxation; and at this period the English King was deeply in debt, having raised loans from all quarters; from the Frescobaldi, the Bardi, and the Peruzzi in Italy, from the wool-staplers and other traders of Flanders, and from the leading English merchants such as the Pulteneys and de la Poles at home.* Hence no assistance could be got by the hire of mercenaries.†

depopulated many districts in England. Norwich never fully recovered from its loss of population, and "Tombland" there still perpetuates the memory of the calamity. In France close upon a hundred thousand persons are said to have perished from the plague in Rouen alone in 1348. The Queen of France had been carried off by the fell disease (a kind of typhus or cholera), the King of England had lost a daughter by it, three Archbishops of Canterbury passed away in less than twelve months, the sitting of Parliament was suspended, business was paralyzed, and labourers could not be found to cultivate the soil or to get in the harvest. In addition to this human suffering a virulent cattle plague broke out and spread over England.

1348, Holinshed records, was an exceedingly wet year.

As in 1917-18, there were food restrictions also in the reign of Edward the Third, and there was a special ordinance promulgated by the Plantagenet monarch that "No man shall be served with more than two courses at dinner

or at supper, except upon certain holidays." This law is said never to have been repealed, and so may be in force to-day!

* Despite his great financial difficulties (for even the jewelled crown of England was held in pawn over the seas), and the burden of heavy loans contracted abroad, it redounds to the credit of Edward the Third that he was the first Sovereign to introduce a gold coinage into England. This was of great purity, and the new coins—the florences or nobles (the representation of the ship on which commemorated the great naval victory at Sluis)—also bore upon them FRANC in addition to ANGL. They were minted in the Tower of London.

† Moreover, Sir S. D. Scott, in his *History of the British Army*, points out that all Edward the Third's forces were—unlike those of his predecessors and successors—national ones, recruited without any foreign element.

In 1349 King Edward sent a missive to the Sheriffs of London complaining that skill in shooting with arrows was being set aside

Bentley

The Battle of Saintes

Bentley returned, therefore, to Brest* in the spring of 1352 with only a scanty addition to his troops, and with the promise of others to follow. The King commanded "purveyances" to be made throughout the West of England for this purpose, and he paid the wages of the mariners, taking the new levies across to Brittany "out of Walter's moneys," partly from want of funds, and partly in order that the charges of the war on the west side of France might be defrayed by the Duchy.

The Viceroy on his return from England found it necessary to proceed at once to raise the siege of Fougères, which the enemy had invested during his absence, and was successful in routing the blockaders and in destroying the lines of entrenchments which had been thrown up around the fortress to cut off its supplies. Conscious of his own great inferiority of numbers, the English commander next set to work promptly to strengthen and to victual the inland Breton fortresses, so that they might be able to withstand a further attack.

Though the garrisons were comparatively small at that time, and no powder, shot or shell were needed so long as "the silent arrow" reigned supreme, yet the task of providing adequately for these strongholds in case of their beleaguerment was no light one. It has to be remembered that (with exception of salt), preservatives were not then in use, and there were no supplies of tinned meat, or of concentrated milk, or

for the pursuit of useless and unlawful games, one of which was that of football!

* When at sea the King's

Lieutenant was entitled to carry on his ship at night a triangle bearing three large lanthorns at the masthead.

even

War-like Preparations

even of army biscuit forthcoming, nor was any "cold storage" available for carcasses. Sugar was then hardly known except in the Orient, nor were there sacks of potatoes. Neither were supplies obtainable from overseas,* and there was not even hay in those days for the use of the live stock in winter.† Wood also had to be stored up for ordinary cooking or warming in place of coal; and charcoal was largely used for cooking on the occasion of banquets or feasts.

Arms, pikes, cross-bows and arrows had to be provided or examined, and wells to be cleared out or deepened. Salt, corn, wine, meat or pork, salted or dried, and in some favourable positions live stock, had to be relied upon, augmented up to the last moment by sweeping the surrounding country for the double purpose of getting all that could be obtained, and of diminishing the supplies left in the neighbourhood for the enemy.

The French King, on his part, was no less active, and preparations were early on foot on a scale of the very first magnitude. Large levies of men were drafted in from Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, Poitou, Saintonge,‡ and from more distant parts of France for the prosecution of the war in the West. Horses and mules were impressed, and wagons, while stocks of weapons were accumulated and stores of provisions gathered together, so that nothing should retard the rapid advance of the expeditionary force, once it was in movement.

* An occasional exception may occur, as, for instance, in 1338, when Edward III. had 480,000 herrings ("forty lasts") transported from Yarmouth to Flanders for the English army over the sea.

† According to *The Verney*

Papers hay did not come into use until more than two centuries later.

‡ For a curious reference to the dialects of these districts two centuries later see Montaigne's *Essay on Presumption*.

The Battle of Saintes

The command of the army was again entrusted to the veteran Marshal de Nesle, who was also invested (in hopeful anticipation of its speedy reconquest) with the empty title of "Governor-General of Brittany." Indicative of the bitter strife which was then raging in Brittany, to assist him M. de Nesle had the services of many Breton nobles besides his lieutenants from other provinces. Among the former were the Sieur de Rieux,* the Vicomte de Rohan, the Comte de la Marche, Jean de Kergolai,† Silvestre de Quenecan,‡ Bonabas de Rougé of Derval,§ Veron de Rougé, and the Seigneurs de Beaumanoir, de Montauban, de Tournemine, and de Tinténac, all of whom espoused the cause of Charles of Blois.

* See p. 37.

† A scion of one of the oldest families in Brittany.

‡ Quenequen.

§ Afterwards made prisoner at the Battle of Poitiers.

Revictualment of Ploërmel

III

AS early as May, Marshal de Nesle succeeded in assembling a very considerable force in the interior of France, the larger proportion of which were men of several years' training, but it was not, however, until the summer was well advanced, the grain crops harvested, and all the difficulties of supply were overcome, that the French commander was fully prepared for active operations—which this time were to be carried out from a new direction, the East. At the beginning of August, the French Marshal was ready to assume the offensive, and he directed the march of his vast array upon Rennes, having the English base at Brest as his objective, a plan of campaign well conceived, and, in view of the small English force in the Duchy, most formidable to withstand.

Although a time of quiet had existed for some months Bentley had kept a watchful eye upon the gathering thunder-clouds in the East, and immediately rumours reached him through his partisans of the French army being at last in motion, he pushed on by forced marches to the succour of Ploërmel, which was then ill-equipped to withstand an attack. He had just finished putting the castle into a state of defence, and the Anglo-Breton forces under his command were starting northward on the 14th of August, 1352, and

its

The Battle of Mauron

its leading files had passed the small lake of Le Duc, when, advancing over the yellow herbage burnt up by the scorching rays of the summer sun, they came into touch with the advance guard of the enemy in the vicinity of MAURON. The Marshal d'Auffremont (de Nesle), utilizing his great superiority of strength, skillfully manœuvred to envelop the flanks of the scanty English force and to cut it off from the coast. The position was a critical one for the latter, and after reinforcing the garrisons of Fougères and Ploërmel the English Commander-in-Chief was (after deducting casualties in the field and stragglers on his previous marches) only able to muster less than three thousand men of all kinds, little over six hundred of whom were seasoned troops, and the French force was more than double. A man of less resoluteness of character than the Captain of Brittany might have been tempted to have fallen hastily back under the walls of Ploërmel, incurring thereby the double danger of being attacked while on the march, or of being invested (like Bazaine at Metz) under the fortress, until his provisions were exhausted or his men disheartened by this admission of their inferiority to the enemy.

Having given an indication by the profuse display of banners and pennons over the countryside, resplendent in the summer sunshine, of the great disparity of numbers and of the consequent hopelessness of any engagement between armies so disproportionate, the Marshal de Nesle, mindful of the kindness and courtesy shown to him by his captor in the previous year, sent a *parlementaire* to propose to the English General an armistice to arrange for the surrender or withdrawal of the British troops across the sea, and to counsel his

antagonist

Character of Bentley

antagonist not to offer battle under such disadvantageous, if not hopeless, conditions.

"The high-spirited Bentley," says Sir James Mackinnon in his *History of Edward III.*, "scorned the advice"—as might be expected from so tough a Yorkshireman, even despite the misgivings of many around him. A French historian has described Bentley as a "Grand Seigneur, fier, et dedaigneux, ayant un peu de la raideur et de la morgue brittanique," but if he had a touch of stiffness or haughtiness this but masked the ability of the man, and, as another French writer said of him, "Gautier de Bentley avait des grandes qualités militaires." "Courage from hearts and not from numbers grows," are the words of Dryden, and truly never was such a man more needed in so desperate a conjuncture.

During this brief interval of pause and expectation even the hum of the countless flies hovering over the grass in the sunshine could be heard.

The English commander had with him at this critical time Knolles and also some of the foremost Breton leaders, amongst them being the gallant Tanguy du Châtel (de Castro), Garnier de Cadoudal, and Yves de Tresiguidi, so that on that hot August afternoon his men were well led, and, as it is quaintly phrased in the chronicle of John Speed, "Bentley had a faire day of the Marshall of France, putting his puissance to flight with much slaughter . . . which bred great astonishment among all King Edward's enemies."

Bentley was familiar with the country round Ploërmel, and with a keen eye to the natural features of the position, as soon as the enemy's approach had been discerned, the Anglo-Breton troops were rapidly drawn

up

The Battle of Mauron

up by their commander on gently rising ground in the vicinity of the Château of Brembili.* From this slight eminence a lovely view was obtainable overlooking the little river Yvel, which sluggishly pursued its winding course near the foot of the ascent. The exact alinement of the troops was influenced by a thin belt of low growing woodland, or copse, which stretched its way along just below the crest of the hill, and like a long wide hedgerow stood immediately in the rear of the men. Those directly in the pay of the King stood out conspicuously in the glinting rays of the sun. According to contemporary evidence the English soldiers at this period wore white coats with the red cross of St. George upon them, both in front and behind, and they were armed with pikes, axes, javelins, and cross-bows. Despite some experiments which had already been made with gunpowder it had not yet come into military use (though there is a tradition of four Genoese cannon having been employed at Crécy). Bentley stationed a strong body of archers to protect each flank, their reach being greater than that of the men-at-arms in the centre. Owing to the insufficiency of his force every man was needed in the fighting line, and he was unable to keep in hand any reserve for emergencies, a circumstance shortly to lead to great peril.

With exception of seven hundred cavalry under General Hangest, which were posted on the left of the French line, the Marshal d'Auffremont dismounted all his troops before the engagement began, even himself descending from his favourite charger. It was growing

* "Ce Château mérite à tous égards d'être vu par les amateurs de l'antiquité et de la belle nature," says the Abbé Manet in 1834, when describing the battle and its site.

Bentley Dangerously Wounded

late in the afternoon when the French advanced to the attack. The Allied force being greatly outnumbered, its centre was slowly driven back by sheer weight of numbers into the long coppice near the top of the hill. Here they were able again for a time to maintain their ground, the Marshal's dismounted men being impeded in their advance by the furze and scrubby woodland as they forced their way up the ascending hillside.

Though now in advancing years, and worn by many arduous campaigns, the leader of the French cavalry had lost none of his wonted fire and energy. His second in command, Renaud de Trie (the Seigneur de Mareuil) was no less ardent. While the unequal conflict was being waged in the centre of the battle area, Hangest's mounted troops, at the blast of a trumpet, suddenly charged home with great *élan* on the Anglo-Breton right, and rode down and completely cut up the English bowmen opposed to them on that flank. Several hundred were killed, and the rest gave way and fled, unhappily for them, headlong in terror. As the dust cleared away all now seemed lost for the British—their centre had been driven in with heavy loss, and while rallying some of his men in the thick of the combat Sir Walter Bentley, their leader, was very dangerously wounded,* and the Allied right wing was broken up and was flying in disorder. M. de Nesle's tactics promised speedily to result in a complete victory for King John!

In the meantime, the archers on the English left, who fortunately had no cavalry opposed to them, after keeping up a hot discharge of arrows, advanced to close quarters and drove back the foot-soldiers of Hambie, on

* "Walterus horribiliter vulneratus," says Geoffrey Baker.

The Battle of Mauron

the French right, so impetuously that their courage wavered and they at last broke their ranks in confusion. Greatly heartened by this good fortune, the wounded English commander brought forward his centre again, and made a vigorous onslaught on the middle of the French position, where the Maréchal d'Auffremont was surrounded by the *élite* of his forces. The issue of this conflict was for some time in doubt, the surge of battle swaying backwards and forwards, but after long and desperate hand-to-hand fighting the attack was successful.

As has already been mentioned, among Bentley's lieutenants on this hard-fought field was the valiant Tannegui du Châtel,* equally at home on the battlefield or among the ladies at Court, and in the *melée* the French Commander-in-Chief, while urging on his men, was singled out by the sturdy Breton, and, after a strenuous encounter, struck down to the earth mortally wounded, falling gloriously in the thickest of the conflict. So closely were the bodies of the slain heaped together near this spot that two entire days elapsed before the remains of the gallant Marshal were discovered.

* Tannegui du Châtel ("de Castro") had some time previously been Governor of Brest, where he was succeeded by an English officer. His gallantry at the Battle of La Roche Derien, and at Hennebont, is historical. Du Châtel was now acting on behalf of the Count of Montfort as Lieutenant-General of his army—the Breton portion of the Allied forces. He married Tiphaine de Pluscalet. The tough

old warrior died in 1352—perhaps from wounds received at the Battle of Mauron? — leaving thirteen children to perpetuate his memory. In the memoir of the Comtesse de Montfort (*Recueil de Romans historiques*, tom. i., 1746) some account is given of du Châtel's flirtations. Incidentally his future wife is spoken of there under the name of Pontcallec (really Plusquelec). She is described as a very fascinating girl.

A

The Choice of Ground

"A thousand glorious actions that might claim
Triumphant laurels and immortal fame,
Confus'd in crowds of glorious actions lie
And troops of heroes undistinguish'd die."

ADDISON.

Discouraged by the loss of their leader, the hostile infantry and dismounted men-at-arms began to waver, and shortly after were driven back in great disorder. In the earlier stage of the battle the English were pushed back slowly *uphill*; their selection of ground was now to be justified. Their opponents, when at last overcome, and pressed *downhill*, were unable to rally or to make any fresh stand, and dispirited by the death of the veteran de Nesle, and that of so many of their commanders, bravely continued a hopeless fight without coherence, or the ability to create a diversion by any counter-attack. Their very numbers even added to their losses!

The French divisions engaged on the field were under the orders of Guillaume de Briquebec, Painel de Hambie,* the redoubtable Sieur de Beaumanoir, the Vicomte de Rohan, the Sieur de Quintin, the Sieur de Derval, the Sieur du Leon, the Sieur de Rochefort, and the mounted troops under the experienced leadership of the future Maréchal de Hangest. The first companies to give way before the Anglo-Breton onslaught were those of de Hambie and de Beaumanoir. The Vicomte de Rohan† and the Sieur de Quintin, disdaining to retreat, were both killed in hand-to-hand fighting on the field, and the Sieur de

* Or Ambie. Ambie was situated in Normandy.

† His widow, the Vicomtesse de Rohan, was consoled two years later by her marriage to a gallant

soldier in King Edward's army, the Welshman, Roger David, in 1354. The King bestowed two castles in Brittany upon David after his marriage.

Briquebec

The Battle of Mauron

Briquebec, while vainly endeavouring to maintain his ground, was surrounded and taken prisoner. The Sieur de Hangest, too, unable to prosecute the advantage which his cavalry had so gallantly obtained on the left flank, was compelled by the rout of the French centre, and the rapid retirement of King John's troops, to wheel back and endeavour to cover the retreat of his unmounted comrades in arms.

The withdrawal of the French horse from the front, though in perfect order, was, however, too late in the day to avert the further wreck of the partly beaten army, and this retrograde movement decided the issue of the action. It was in vain that the Knights of the Star* recklessly flung themselves in despair, almost unsupported, upon the foe, biting the dust in turn. Many unseen deeds of heroism were wrought which never can be known, but it was impossible to stem the flowing tide. The English line now steadily advanced along its entire length and swept all before it as the Allied forces pressed down the slope. The slaughter of the retreating foe was very great; knights in chain-armour and their esquires suffered equally with the pikemen and archers.

The retiring French, who had now reached the opposite slope of the valley which rose up behind

* Another "Round Table Order"—the Gallic Order of THE KNIGHTS OF THE STAR was instituted by King John of France on November 16, 1351, in rivalry to the recently founded "Order of the Garter" in England. The Knights of the Star were restricted to three hundred in number, and were to be either members of the

Royal Family, or of the highest nobility of France. Though it lingered for a year or two afterwards, the Order never survived the shock it received at the Battle of Mauron, where so many of its members perished. The badge of the Order was a star surmounted by a royal crown and the motto, "*Monstrant Regibus astra Viam.*"

them

The English Pursuit

them, still fought on desperately in the twilight, but in isolated groups only, and, unable to reform their ranks, were driven *pêle-mêle* off the field or cut to pieces, the whole of their forces except Hangest's cavalry being put to flight. These sturdy horsemen alone, says the chronicler, preserved some semblance of order in their retreat. The English pursuit being vigorously followed up, immense numbers of the flying enemy, burdened with the weight of heavy armour there was no time to discard, pikemen without weapons, men-at-arms without horses, and archers without bows, were cut down in their headlong exodus with comparatively little loss to their assailants. As these encounters grew fewer the cries of battle slowly died down in the silence of the evening. Uphill ground again hindered the movements of the enemy, and it was steeper behind them than it was in front at the outset of the battle. Probably in the wild panic of that night of carnage many, too, were entangled and hindered in their effort to escape by the long teams of supply wains or roped pack-horses and mules tethered in rear of their lines, and whose drivers had already attempted to avoid death or capture by stampeding blindly over the roadless ground.

Pausing not—perhaps owing to the growing darkness of night—to ransack the tents and waggons, or to sample the wine-skins—pressing ever on until breath itself failed, and the streaks of the early dawn of summer-time began to lighten the sky over the plains towards Rennes, the toll exacted by the pursuing force was a heavy one. “And there were slain there the Seneschal of Anjou, the Seneschal of Benevente, the Viscount of Rohan, my Lord John Frere, the Lord of Quintin, the

Lord

The Battle of Mauron

Lord of Tinténia,* the Lord of Montauban, my Lord Reginald of Montauban, the Lord Robert Raguene†, my Lord William of Launay, my Lord Auffray of Montbouchier, my Lord William of Vielchastel, my Lord William de la Marche, and other knights to the amount of seven score (140) with esquires which amount to five hundred dead upon the field, all bearing coat-armour—and commoner folk without number. . . . And there were taken there the Lord of Briquebec,‡ the son of the Marshal Bertrand,§ the Lord of Males-troit, my Lord Tristram of Maignelais,|| the Vicomte de Coëtmen,¶ my Lord Geoffrey of Coeyghem, my Lord John of Laval, the Lord Incher (Inchy), my Lord Charles of Argeville, my Lord John of La Muce, and many other knights and esquires up to eight score (160), of whom, either slain or taken, are full five hundred and forty knights of high rank.”

No mere catalogue of titles, but each one representative of some great feudal house, and indicative

* “Le fameux Tinténia qui s'étoit acquis tant de gloire a la bataille des Trente.”—MORICE.

† Lord Robert Raguene† was also one of the knights who had taken part in the Combat of the Thirty in 1351 at La Croix Helléan, at the chêne de mi-voie (the Combat of the Midway Oak.)

‡ The Castle of Briquebec is close to Valognes in the Cotentin. In the reign of Napoleon I. some *oubliettes* were discovered within the walls of the castle, and in one of them were found the remains of some victim of feudal tyranny, with a flat silver flask nearly full of dried up wine by his side. The

Sieur de Briquebec was a son of the Marshal de Briquebec.

§ Or Bertram.

|| The unfortunate Tristram had to pledge the greater part of his lands to raise sufficient funds for his ransom, and then had the ill-luck to be again taken prisoner at Poitiers. He held the office of Grand Bouteiller et Eschanson de France. (Stow styles him Tristram de Malcis.) He was grandfather of Agnes Sorel, the mistress of Charles VII. of France.

¶ The Vicomte de Coëtmen was related to the historic Pen-thievre family. Stow spells his name Comaine.

also

The Toll of Battle

also of the widespread area from which the hostile army was assembled. According to Sébillot nearly two thousand corpses alone lay stretched on the field of battle that eventful August night.*

Such were the closing paragraphs of the official account of the Battle of Mauron (written in French), which was transmitted to the Lord Chancellor in England† before all the results were ascertained—and it is perhaps somewhat singular to observe that only five years previously (in 1347) Bentley's immediate predecessor, Sir Thomas Dagworth, in a hard-fought battle in Brittany, had killed many of the previous holders of the identical titles above—*e.g.*, the Lord of Laval, Vicomte de Rohan, the Lord of Malestroit, and the Lord of Quintin, besides taking prisoners on the same occasion the Lord of Tinténac, young Gui de Laval, and other nobles.

In addition to the death of the Commander-in-Chief of the French army—the Marshal d'Auffremont‡—not ascertained when the official report went off hurriedly to England, there were also slain, besides the nobles already enumerated in it, the Seneschal of Rouen, the Lords of Rougemont, Courtenai, Mont de Bayeux, de l'Aigle,§ de Villebon, and de Chastelet. There was also, it was subsequently discovered, one person killed in the fray whose fate excited no commiseration on either side! Fighting under his recently acquired title of de Beauvoir, which helped to conceal a deed of

* Yves Sébillot, in his *History of the Breton People*, career had resided at Beverley.

† John Thoresby, Bishop of Worcester, afterwards Archbishop of York and Cardinal Thoresby, during a part of his ecclesiastical

‡ “Ye principall Marshall of France,” Stow styles him in his *Annals of England*.

§ De l'Aigle (the place is north of Alençon) was Jean de Harcourt.

infamy

F

The Battle of Mauron

infamy, the traitor Ralph of Cahors (who had entrapped the brave Dagworth to his death*) met with a just retribution, and his end. Among the prisoners taken after the battle were also Pierre de Villiers (who was ransomed by the French King in 1353 for "mille deniers d'or," and who afterwards held an important post in the Government of France), Sir Tristram de Morlaix, Sir Geoffrey de Gray (Grez),† Galfridus de Goanes, Sir John de Brou,‡ and Sir William de Laval. The redoubtable Seigneur de Beaumanoir, a Lieutenant-General of the King, and the most prominent of those who participated in the Combat of the Thirty in 1351, was one of the foremost in the fighting-line at Mauron. He bore the French title of Maréchal de Bretagne. (De Beaumanoir went over as an Ambassador to England in 1351 with Bertrand du Guesclin.)

Monsieur de la Borderie is amply justified, remarks Professor Tout in *The English Historical Review*, in claiming an important place in history for the Battle of Mauron ("the signal victory of Mauron," as the Rev. S. Baring Gould styles it in his *Brittany*§), and in lamenting the way in which English historians have so long neglected its study. Apart from the great political importance of the results obtained by the victors, and the consternation created in the French capital, the battle itself is one of peculiar interest from a military point of view, as the French, after Créçy, were altering their plan of tactics so as to conform better to the English methods of fighting. Though pardonably not desirous, as in the case of Sismondi or Michelet, of

* See *ante*, p. 5.

† Or La Gree.

‡ John de Bruse in Stow's list

of prisoners, Johannes de Bause in another record.

§ *Handbook of Brittany* (1902).

dwelling

The Historic Aspect

dwelling unduly upon so adverse an event, still, the fullest accounts of the battle are those given by French chroniclers (who frankly admit, too, the great disparity of strength), but, Royalty not having been present (as at Crécy, Poitiers, or Agincourt), comparatively little notice of the victory has been taken by English writers, even despite the holocaust of the French nobility. Yet the desperate autumn struggle on the field of Mauron settled the fate of Brittany for many years to come,* and it has also especial importance as a link in the chain of military operations which extends from Crécy to Poitiers. If the pluck of the Allied forces in carrying the day against such heavy odds is to be commended, no less admiration can be felt for the dogged courage of the French, who endeavoured so gallantly to maintain the conflict long after the issue of the day had gone against them—so strikingly displayed by their heavy death-roll, and evinced by the loss of their commander, and the immense sacrifice of the superior officers conducting the fight. The victory of Mauron consolidated for a time the Plantagenet occupation of Brittany. This second attack upon the stronghold of English power in the West, laboriously prepared at huge cost and with unremitting exertions by King John, was annihilated by a single, but crushing, blow.

* Two and a half centuries later, one regrets to say, the English got into bad repute at Mauron. The parish register of 1591 (says the Rev. Sabine Gould) is headed :

“The Baptismal Register of Mauron made after the Prince of Darkness with the English and the lancequenects of his company had passed. They spent the Sunday here, September 8, 1591 (O.S.), pillaged and plundered all they could lay hand on in the Church, and

carried off the Baptismal Register—on which account this book is now begun.”

[The above reference is probably to some detached troops of Sir John Norris's command when an English contingent was sent to Brittany in the reign of Queen Elizabeth to protect the country against an invasion by the Spaniards.]

Bentley

The Battle of Mauron

Bentley, himself a very strenuous man, was a stern disciplinarian, and even though badly wounded and exhausted (a fact he leaves others to relate, and it is omitted in the formal account of the battle sent to England by his instructions) chafed greatly at the giving way of his bowmen before the onslaught of Hangeſt's men-at-arms, which had jeopardized the very existence of his army. "The French army was ſo dreadful," ſays Dr. Barnes in 1688, "that it diſmayed the hearts of ſeveral Engliſhmen ſo that they began to flee, but the courageous Sir Walter Bentley would not flinch a foot, but opposed good conduct and indefatigable reſolution to the fury of his enemies 'till after a bloody fight (wherein hardly one of the Engliſh eſcaped unhurt, and Sir Walter himſelf was grievouſly, tho' not mortally, wounded) by the grace of God he obtained a famous victory." Though on moſt occaſions (as numerous entries on the Rolls teſtify) a kindly man, this time he was inexorable, and, deſpite his weakened condition, ordered a court martial to be held the very next day after the battle, ſo that thoſe who had done badly ſhould be puniſhed. Bentley was of the ſame opinion as the great Duke of Wellington on a ſimilar occaſion.* Many of the leſſer delinquents were reprimed, but thirty of the archers with the worſt record underwent the ſentence of death, and were immediately decapitated, or, according to ſome accounts, hanged. The peril in which the Engliſh army was placed at Mauron through the deficiency of archers ſtimulated

* "Yes," ſaid the Duke, "it is ſo inhuman as impunity."—Stanhope's *Converſations of the Duke of Wellington*, p. 251.

Consternation throughout France

special exertions to recruit this branch of the service, and in 1355 the City of London placed at the disposal of the King a newly raised body of five hundred archers in uniform and twenty-five men-at-arms.*

A curious circumstance in connection with the battle, and one significant of the complication of parties at that time in Brittany, is that Jean Sieur de Rieux was serving under the banner of the Maréchal de Nesle, and taking a prominent part in the conflict. De Rieux was the husband of Isabeau de Clisson, the daughter of Lady Bentley by her second marriage.

As the scattered survivors of the defeated army carried the tidings of the disaster into the interior and to the Capital a great consternation spread over France. Many of the flower of Gallic chivalry had perished—the aristocratic Order of the Knights of the Star† had been extinguished for ever—and only the paucity of the Anglo-Breton forces prevented an advance into the Central Provinces. At the earliest moment the Lord of Beaujeu was, like his father, created a Marshal of France, and was placed in command of the remains of M. de Nesle's shattered forces.‡ For his gallantry during the battle Rogues, Seigneur de Hangest, too, received the *bâton* of a Field-Marshal.

A “cog,”§ or despatch-boat, sent across the Channel by the Governor of Brest, John Maynard,|| carried the

* Colonel Raikes's *History of the Honourable Artillery Company of London*, vol. i., p. 6.

† See a footnote on p. 30.

‡ The Lord of Beaujeu had served for some years under the Marshal de Nesle.

§ From this word cockswain is derived.

|| Maynard had only just taken charge at Brest, being appointed there on July 28, 1352.

earliest

The Battle of Mauron

earliest news of the victory to England, and, incomplete though the account was, it was received with great rejoicings at Court and throughout the country, and especially at Beverley.*

* The connexion of the family with Beverley was a long-standing one, and soon after this, on the return of Walter Bentley to Brittany, Sir John Bentley of Beverley made in May, 1356, a munificent gift of nearly three hundred acres of woods and pasturages near Luttrington and Beverley to the Prior and Convent of Warter (in the East Riding), in return for which

a Chantry was to be founded 'according to his ordinance,' says the record in the Rolls. (John's predecessor, Sir Richard Bentley, was also a benefactor to the neighbourhood, and was also one of the supporters of the Hospital of St. Giles at Beverley, defraying in it the upkeep of two beds annually, to be reserved for sick men from his property at Bentley.)

The Pretender in Brittany

IV

MAURON would have extinguished all hope of the Blois faction for the possession of Brittany had not that astute and perfidious man the Pretender Charles already other schemes on foot when the news of the thunder-clap in Brittany reached London and left him only the resources of intrigue. "The pen ever mightier than the sword"—war having failed to expel the invader from France, diplomacy was now tried on the banks of the Seine. At the beginning of 1353 Charles of Blois, by the help of Queen Philippa, his cousin, procured his release on parole to proceed across Channel to France to procure the funds for his ransom (which would have been very acceptable in the empty coffers of the English Exchequer); and with a view to favourably influence the British Sovereign he discussed a project of marriage between his son John and Margaret, the infant daughter of Edward the Third. One of his first acts, however, on reaching the Continent, was to seize by a stratagem the castle and island of Tristan (on the extreme west coast of Brittany) and to put the whole of King Edward's garrison to death !

Before Charles, however, had left England King Edward sent private instructions to his Viceroy on the spot to hand over certain important strongholds in Brittany to the partisans of Charles of Blois.

Gauging as he did the character and duplicity of the
Pretender

After Mauron

Pretender, it seemed incredible to Bentley that such orders could be *genuine*, and he took upon himself the responsibility of suspending their execution until they were confirmed, or (if they were genuine) he had an opportunity of showing good reasons against the cession.

It was a very remarkable circumstance that on no less than three times in his career Sir Walter Bentley should have been brought into direct conflict with the most powerful monarch in Europe and to have emerged successfully on each occasion from so dangerous an ordeal. When comparatively young he had thrown in his lot with the Archbishop of Canterbury (Stratford) when he forced an entrance (in 1341) into the Palace of Westminster with a number of other knights and an armed retinue.* Two years then elapsed before the Royal pardon was accorded to Bentley for this bold trespass against the Crown. The next occasion was in the earlier stages of his feud with Ralph of Cahors, when the King at first differed from Bentley's opinion concerning his fidelity (and even promoted Cahors), only later coming over to his view. The same thing was now again to happen in connection with the Breton Pretender, of whom Bentley was shrewdly distrustful.

Plantagenet rulers, however, were seldom to be trifled with, even when mistaken! Sir Walter hurried across the seas to seek an interview with the King in England, and shortly after landing was—to his intense indignation—arrested by Edward the Third's orders and lodged, a State prisoner, in the Tower of London,

* See Dean Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. iv., pp. 238, 239. Also Stubbs's *Constitutional History of England*, pp. 56 *et seq.*, and Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. i., vol. ii., pp. 421-423.

whence

Bentley's Incarceration

whence Charles of Blois had just emerged. However mortified he might feel at this reception and exchange of parts, it is possible that the enforced rest may have had one beneficial effect and secured him a partial recovery from his wounds. Among other distinguished prisoners in the Tower at that time were the King of Scotland ; the Lord Chief Justice of England ; and de Vienne, the gallant French Governor of Calais—to be followed, three years later, by the King of France himself.

Bentley appears to have been confined in the White Tower, though no doubt he enjoyed a considerable measure of liberty within the walls. An old friend and very distinguished soldier—Sir John Beauchamp, K.G.—was Constable of the Tower at this time. That historic pile then served many purposes, not only as a fortress, and as a residence, and as a storehouse of the Royal treasure and archives, but also as a mint, and even as a menagerie !—for the King's leopards were caged within the fortress.

“ *Hiems (1353-54) longa, dura, et frigida,*” says one of the chroniclers. During his confinement at the capital Sir Walter was probably kept cognisant by his brother-in-arms Beauchamp of much that was happening at this period. The conflict of the dynasties in Japan was doubtless beyond his ken ; he might not either have heard of the wonderful exploits of Marco Polo, or the mythical ones of “ Sir John Mandeville ” ; but he may have discussed the remarkable changes taking place nearer home in Europe, the great October earthquake felt throughout France and Southern Germany, the formation of the new Republic in Switzerland, the triumphal entry of the Tribune Rienzi into

Rome

After Mauron

Rome, the victories of Louis the Great in Hungary, the political importance of the advent of the Turks in Eastern Europe just as the Moors in the West were being turned out of Spain, the civil war between “the hooks” and “the codfish” (between Mother and Son) for the sovereignty of Holland, or the base murder of Inez de Castro in Portugal. Many events at home, too, aroused attention at the moment: the Statute of Labourers, the Bishop of Ely’s difficulties with King Edward, the fortifications arising round the (then) great Midland town of Coventry, the disastrous and very fatal affray between “Town” and “Gown” on Saint Scholastica’s day at Oxford,* and the new dignities just granted (1354) to the Mayor of London of having gold and silver maces carried before him.

What was still more interesting to Bentley, however, was news from Beverley, and of the completing stages in the building of the great Minster there, and also of the important mission—the last one he ever undertook—of the diplomatist Bishop Bateman to the Pope at Avignon, to endeavour to settle the affairs of State in France. Still more keenly watchful must have been the prisoner of the doings of Charles of Blois in Brittany, and of the efforts of Bentley’s stalwart lieutenants to hold their own against the machinations of the Pretender. The King’s advance into Scotland was also anxiously followed week by week, as during his absence little could be achieved towards effecting the release of the captive from the Tower.†

* On February 10, 1354.

† A curious regulation was in force, but whether to prevent anyone approaching the fortress, or

to protect the cleanliness of the water, if used for drinking purposes, is uncertain. “No person was allowed, *temp.* Edward III.,

In

Sir John Avesnel

In years to come Warren Hastings or Clive were to discover that even empires might be won without gratitude being shown to their founders, and the conqueror of Mauron for a brief time shared the same fate,* for by a Royal decree issued on the 4th of April, 1353, Sir John Avesnel was designated as the King's Lieutenant in Brittany in his stead.† This appointment was not well received in the Duchy, and in Bentley's absence the French succeeded in defeating Sir Hugh Calveyley at Montmuran‡ and made him prisoner. After the treachery of Charles of Blois at Tristan, moreover, Avesnel met with the greatest reluctance on the part of all Bentley's late commanders to surrender any of the Breton strongholds, which had been selected for that purpose, to Charles, and in consequence of this

to bathe in the Tower, or in the Thames near the Tower, under a penalty of death," quotes John Timbs in his *Curiosities of London*. ("The Tower" here probably means *the moat* immediately surrounding it?)

* It is fair to King Edward to consider that, while Bentley's temporary incarceration in the Tower was due to his not having carried out the Royal decrees overseas, his supersession in Brittany was possibly due to another cause, namely, that he had been so seriously wounded at Mauron that he was no longer physically able to stand the strain of so arduous a command involving the personal supervision of a great portion of Western France in days when communications were difficult. Moreover, it would have been

very awkward for Bentley himself to have resumed his position after what had recently taken place in London.

† Sir John Avesnel, like his successor Lord Latymer, had a bad record in Brittany, was dismissed from his post for robbing the King's Customs, and was put into prison in England. His wife Margery also had grievances, and petitioned the King to be divorced from her husband. Avesnel, who owned a considerable amount of property in various parts of England, and had long been in the service of the Crown, died (like his immediate predecessor) in 1359. His family appears to have been connected with that of King Robert Bruce (see *Notes and Queries*, IX. Ser., vol. xi., p. 228).

‡ On April 10, 1354.

delay

After Mauron

delay a special Commissioner had to be sent out from England to remonstrate with those captains who still refused to obey the orders of the King's new Lieutenant, Sir John Avesnel. In less than a year Avesnel had himself to be superseded, for speculation, and in the meantime the intrigues of Charles of Blois had brought home to the English King the error of his policy. In June, 1354, therefore, Bentley was released from the Tower on condition that he did not go out of England,* and a bill for expenses amounting to £120 was presented to him ! The naval hero, Admiral Lord Morley (who succeeded Beauchamp as Constable of the Tower), came into residence just as Bentley went out.

It was not until November, 1354, however, that the ex-viceroy's foresight in holding on to the strong places of Brittany was fully admitted to be justified by the course of subsequent events, and all restrictions upon his freedom of action were removed. Anxious to rejoin his wife, Bentley immediately applied for his passports to leave this country "with all his men, the members of his household, his things and possessions." He shook the dust of England off his feet !

Ships were provided by the King for him and his retinue to cross to Brittany, and Bentley took with him Simon de Neweton, one of the King's secretaries. At last ample justice was publicly done to the victorious warrior by his Sovereign and country. "*Postea tamen compertum fuit per evidentiam facti quod grande malum contigisset si dicta castra ad opus Caroli fuissent liberata, et tunc Dominus Walterus gratiam Regis*

* The High Sheriff of Cumberland and six members of the chief Yorkshire families stood as sponsors for the carrying out of this condition.

Honours for Bentley

recuperavit, et a carcere liberatus. Rediit in Britanniam cum magnâ benevolentia Regis," says Robert of Avesbury [420. "The Unjust Imprisonment of Walter de Bentley"]. Right royally, then, did King Edward make amends for what had passed.

Though naturally a man of vigorous constitution, so serious, according to the chroniclers, was the nature of the wounds received at Maumon, that Bentley suffered from the effects of them to the close of his life, which indeed was shortened by them. The state of his health did not therefore permit him to become again Viceroy, but before Bentley left for France in 1355 he received at the King's hands the gift to him, and to his wife "Johanna de Belleville, Lady of Cliczon and Blengi," of the Castellany of Pount Calet, and the parishes of Beaubri and Questeynt (situated between Pontivy and Hennebont, in the fertile valley of the Blavet*) and a large tract of the surrounding country, and, in a different direction, "et etiam omnia in partibus de Kemenethby, du Broroc, et Liguel." This last-named place, Liguel, lies some five-and-twenty miles to the south of the cathedral city of Tours, and is situated on the banks of the little river Esvre. "The Lord of Legeuel," Stow says, "was amongst the slain at Maumon," which explains how the township fell into new hands.

Though suffering from the effects of his wounds received on the battlefield just mentioned, Bentley appears still to have been actively engaged in affairs; and in the following year (1356) a yet more graceful acknowledgment of his services was made when the

* Hennebont and the Blavet when they landed troops and Valley attracted the cupidity of captured them.
the Spaniards as late as in 1590,

After Mauron

custody of the Castle and town of Ploërmel, situated only a few miles from the scene of his greatest exploit, was bestowed upon the conqueror of Mauron.

During this year Bentley was across the sea, and for a short time in Yorkshire, but he returned to Brittany before the autumn gales, accompanied by his faithful Gascon squire, Sir Peter Cusance,* and in January, 1357, the King (who was then engaged with Henry, Duke of Lancaster, in besieging the ancient capital of Brittany, Rennes), granted his victorious soldier the barony of LA ROCHE MOISAN, together with some other lands formerly held by partisans of Charles of Blois, and gave him also the island of Groix out in the stormy Atlantic.† The administration of so many possessions,‡ scattered over so large an area, must have been no sinecure! As a matter of State policy lands granted (whether in England or in France) were usually scattered widely apart (which, however, made them usually less efficiently administered), being left in the hands of deputies.

Bentley had never fully recovered from the fearful injuries he had received seven years previously on the field of Mauron, and in the summer of 1359 his vigorous frame succumbed to them. Sir Walter died rich in possessions and full of honours. It is somewhat curious to observe that no less than four Viceroys of Brittany passed away within a few months of each

* Probably a relative of Henri de Cusance, who was a Marshal of France in 1255. William de Cusance, Chivalier, is also mentioned as taking part in the war, in 1345. William for many years was Keeper of the King's Wardrobe.

† The grant was made "à nostre bien-ami Mon'sor Gualtier de Bentelée, & à nostre tres-chere Cousine la Dame de Belleville & de Cliczon, sa campagne."

‡ See Appendix C, p. 55.

other

Bentley's Death

other—the Earl of Northampton (Bohun), the Earl of Kent (Holand), Avesnel, and Bentley. Three of these were consummate soldiers, for in his brief tenure of office Bentley twice overthrew the might of France in a stricken field. Two of his pupils, moreover, Knolles and Calveley, splintered many a lance subsequently against the French.

Bentley's widow, Joan, "the Lady of Clisson," only survived him a few weeks. His stepson, Oliver (who had returned to Brittany from England in 1358), succeeded to their property. He afterwards became High Constable of France, and died enormously wealthy at his Castle of Josselin in 1404.*

Sir Thomas Bentley, chivaler† (the son of Geoffrey Bentley), who also took part in the wars in Brittany, long outlived the events just related, and died in Yorkshire in 1378, and his widow, Joan, founded a chantry in Beverley Minster in his memory.

* See Appendix A, p. 52.

† Sir Thomas (who was lord of the manor of Seton), even when in advancing years, according

to contemporary record, strenuously competed with Archbishop Thoresby for the excellent venison then in the park of Beverley.

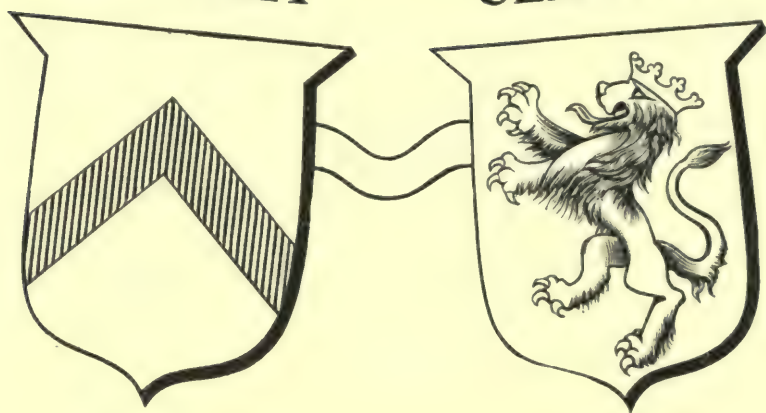
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APPENDICES

BENTLEY

CLISSON



Appendix (A)

(A) THE LADY OF CLISSON

(See p. 3.)

JEANNE was the only daughter and sole heiress of Maurice, Seigneur of Belleville, in Poitou (and also lord of several other places), by his wife Letice de Parthenay.* The exact date of Jeanne's birth is not known, but it was probably about 1296. While still a timid, shy girl she married, firstly, about 1312, Geoffrey de Chateaubriant, and had by him two children. He died early, and Jeanne, a rich heiress, and still quiet and retiring, married, secondly, about 1328, Olivier, the third Sieur de Clisson.† Four children were the fruit of this marriage—two sons, Olivier, born in 1336, afterwards High Constable of France, and Guillaume, born about 1340, who died of hunger on the ocean. The two daughters were Isabel‡ and Jeanne.§ The Sieur de Clisson, suspected of favouring the English cause at Nantes, was suddenly arrested when in Paris by King Philip of France, and beheaded without formal trial on August 2, 1343.

The shock of this event developed in Jeanne a surpassing and unsuspected vigour of character. She immediately rallied her husband's retainers, and declared war against King Philip. She drove out the French garrisons on the Loire or put them to the sword, and even captured Lannion as far off as in Brittany. At last, driven back by the arrival of superior forces, Jeanne was obliged to take to the sea, and, having acquired three ships of war, she devastated French commerce afloat until King Philip was able to assemble a powerful squadron of vessels. Pursued by her enemies, the ship she was in fell a prey to a hurricane from the south-west and sprang a leak. Jeanne, and her two little sons who were with her, and a few faithful mariners, succeeded in escaping from the vessel before she foundered, getting on board a small sloop which was in company, but as it was not properly provisioned they spent several days without food, rocking on the tempestuous

* Parthenay is in the neighbourhood of Rennes.

† Olivier de Clisson had previ-

ously married, in May, 1320, Blanche de Bouville.

‡ For her marriage see p. 37.

§ Married to Jean Haspedane.

ocean

Appendix (A)

ocean until the storm abated. Little William of Clisson died of exhaustion in his mother's arms. After six anxious days of peril and famine the tiny craft succeeded in reaching the harbour of Morlaix, where the Lady of Clisson found a warm welcome from Jeanne of Flanders (the brave Countess of Montfort and the heroine of Hennebont).

Young Olivier de Clisson,* a handsome youth, was afterwards sent to London with the son of the Duc de Montfort, a somewhat sickly child, and Olivier became a favourite of the King. He was brought up at the English Court, and afterwards in various chateaux of his uncle, Amauri de Clisson, which (Amauri having been killed in 1347 at La Roche Derien) belonged to Sir Walter Bentley, who had married, as stated earlier in these pages, the Lady of Clisson in 1348-9. Olivier inherited, through his mother, much land and property, besides the rich port dues of Bordeaux (with clearance of every ship passing in or out of the Gironde). Blein, too, was a seigneurie pertaining to Clisson, and Olivier inherited as well the land and property of his stepfather, Bentley, who had also, according to Le Franc, amassed a very large amount of treasure. The after-life of the Constable and his enmity to England are too well known to be touched upon here.

Sir Walter Bentley and his wife both died in 1359. Knyghton darkly hints at some tragedy, and even alleges that Lady Bentley played the part of a Clytemnestra, "as will appear more fully later on"—but he does not give any facts in support of the innuendo. Neither can any data be discovered in the narratives of other writers for such a supposition.

Knyghton's slander against the Lady of Clisson is, perhaps, best disposed of by King Edward III. himself. The terms in which he refers to the eminent services of the late Sir Walter Bentley, and also to the devotion and loyalty of his wife Joan, are on record in 1359, when the King transferred their property to Oliver of Clisson. (See Rymer's *Fœdera*, First edition, folio, vol. vi., pp. 151-2-3.)

* He was born on April 23, at the time of his mother's third marriage, 1336, and was thirteen years old

Appendix (B)

(B) WALTER BENTLEY

"A heart which beat bravely in the reign of Edward III."

(See p. 3.)

[The East Yorkshire Bentleys were the earliest offshoot of the family of that name originally established in Staffordshire and Derbyshire.]

1302 (*about*). Born near Beverley, in Yorkshire. ? A son of John Bentley.

1333. War on the Scottish Border.

1337. Takes part in the war in France.

1341. Present at Westminster on the side of (John Stratford), Archbishop of Canterbury, when he forced an entrance in arms into the palace in defiance of the King's will. (See 1343.)

1342. Nevertheless, is placed in charge of the ports upon the Humber, at the beginning of the year.

Is sent out to Brittany with the expedition.

Attempts to raise the siege of VANNES by a bold march from Ploërmel.

1343. Receives officially the Royal pardon for his trespass at Westminster. (See 1341.)

1345. Invested with special powers of control in Brittany, in conjunction with the Governor of Brest (Gatesden)* and Tangui du Châtel, to preserve order and to suppress insurrectionary movements.

1348. Is concerned in a lawsuit regarding some property in Yorkshire—which suit is held over by the Court on account of his absence (with Thomas Bentley also) in Brittany.

1349 (*about*). Marries Joan, "the Lady of Clisson."

1349. Receives a grant of the Island of Noirmoutiers, and also of the adjacent salt marshes on the mainland, and of various towns and castles in their immediate vicinity.

* Possibly a son of John Gatesden was made Governor of the den, the Hertfordshire physician Isle of Wight in 1352. commemorated by Fuller. Gates-

Appendix (B)

- The King stops a dispute and arranges "a concord" between Walter Bentley and Ralph of Cahors, then Viceroy of Poitou.
- 1350 [September]. Bentley is appointed Viceroy of Brittany in succession to Sir Thomas Dagworth (slain at Auray by Ralph of Cahors, his colleague).
1351. French invasion of the Atlantic provinces. Sir John Beauchamp and Sir Walter Bentley prepare to meet it.
[April] The Battle of SAINTES. Bentley defeats the Marshal de Nesle near Taillebourg, routs his forces, and takes many distinguished prisoners, including the French Commander-in-Chief.
And obtains possession of many important fortresses lately held by the French.
1352. Visits King Edward in England.
Returns to Brittany, and raises the siege of Fougères.
A large French army invades Brittany.
[August] Bentley meets the enemy's forces at MAURON, and, despite the disparity in numbers, totally defeats them, and kills the French Commander-in-Chief in the battle. Large numbers of the French nobility are also slain, including Ralph of Cahors. The Knights of the Star are extinguished also. Bentley himself is very dangerously wounded.
1353. Charles of Blois intrigues in London.
Bentley returns to England. In April he is relieved of the Viceroyalty of Brittany, and committed to the Tower of London for not surrendering the Breton fortresses to Charles of Blois.
1354. Bentley's action is speedily justified and he is released from the Tower.
He returns to Brittany restored to the full favour of the King.
1355. He receives the Castellany of Pount Calet and certain lands in Brittany and Touraine.
1356. The Castle and Town of Ploërmel are granted to Bentley.
He revisits England for the last time.
1357. Bentley is created Baron of La Roche Moisan, receives further grants of lands, and also the Island of Groix.
1358. He is still suffering from his wounds received at Mauron.
1359. Bentley dies. Lady Bentley dies a few weeks later. Oliver of Clisson succeeds as heir.

Appendix (C)

(C) PROPERTY

OF

SIR WALTER BENTLEY

LORD OF NOIRMOUTIERS AND OF CLISSON,
AND BARON OF ROCHE MOISAN.

(*See pp. 4 and 46.*)

IN addition to various outlying properties in Beverley, Luttrington, Borthelby, and other parts of Yorkshire, Sir Walter Bentley inherited from his ancestors lands at Bentley, which is situated on the east slope of the wolds, some three or four miles on the south-west side of Beverley (and outside the line of crosses demarcating the sanctuary limits of St. John of Beverley). Bentley lay midway between the well-wooded district of Bishops' Burton and the once noble residence of Cottingham Castle, while farther to the south of it was the ancient Augustinian Priory of Haltemprise. (Edward I. visited Bentley in October, 1296.)

Besides which, in virtue of his marriage, Bentley received the castles of Blein and of Clisson, in the vicinity of Nantes, and was enriched by participation in the harbour dues of Bordeaux, which for two hundred years was an English city and very busy port; and after the death of Amauri de Clisson (one of the gallant defenders of Hennebont),* some additional castles and lands in Brittany, or Poitou, came to Sir Walter. Clisson, one of the most beautiful places in Europe, was a great centre of Royalist activity at the time of the first French Revolution. The lands around Clisson were rich in corn, vineyards, and pasturage.

To these have to be added the many fiefs which Sir Walter gained by his own prowess across the sea.

In 1349. The valuable coastal marshes of Chauvé and Boign, previously held by Henry of Lancaster. From these was derived by evaporation a huge supply of "Bay Salt," which was in great request throughout Europe before the introduction of hay enabled more cattle to be kept alive throughout the winter. So valuable was this supply

* He was killed at the Battle of La Roche Derien in 1347.

that

Appendix (C)

that some time later (in 1371) the Flemings made an organized attempt to seize the salt lagoons, and to carry off the accumulated stock there.

Also the chain of forts or towns protecting the above marshes from trespass, and forming the homes also of the workers there—of Beauvoir, Ampant, La Barre, La Baye, and of Castelneuf.

Also the Forest of Villemain.

And the great and important Île de Noirmoutiers, twelve miles long, with its fortress, chief town, and harbour. Noirmoutiers is said to possess a large number of "prehistoric" monuments, and the ancient Benedictine monastery of Her is also situated on the island. Owing to the deposits brought down by the Loire its area is slowly increasing. So valuable is this island from its position, that in after-years it was occupied by the Venetians and the Dutch in succession as a haven for their shipping passing along the coast or trading for salt. At the present day over a thousand vessels enter the harbour annually.

In the seventeenth century the great family of Tremouille took their dukedom from this island. In the war in La Vendée General Charette made Noirmoutiers his headquarters in 1793, and a terrible massacre took place on the island when the Republicans seized it in 1794. Some reference to Noirmoutiers and the causeway connecting it at low tide with the mainland will be found in James's *Naval History of Great Britain* under date of June, 1800.

In 1354 (June 11) Bentley received a grant of the fertile lands of Pont Calet,* Beaubri, Questinic, "Kemenethby" [Kemenetboe], near La Roche Moisan, Broroc,† and Liguel. The last named near Tours.

In 1356. The town and castle of Ploërmel.

In 1357. The Barony of Roche Moisan, which had previously belonged to the Lords of Rohan‡ (Morbihan); and also some other lands previously held by partisans of Charles of Blois.

And the wind-swept Île Groix out in the Atlantic, off L'Orient.

* It is said that the Port de la Baye (Bourneuf), to which the ships came to load with salt, was within the jurisdiction of Colet Castle (*Fœdera*, III. 642). This very possibly may be identical with Pont Calet, or Pount Calet? (See also a note regarding Tanguet de Châtel upon p. 28.) Pont Callec was previously granted by King Edward to the Lady of Clisson before her remarriage. It was given on September 13, 1345.

† Perhaps Bruc.

‡ Besides La Roche Moisan the Vicomte de Rohan had also held Kemenetboe, and the Île Groix. (See Père Anselme's *History*, vol. iv., p. 55.)

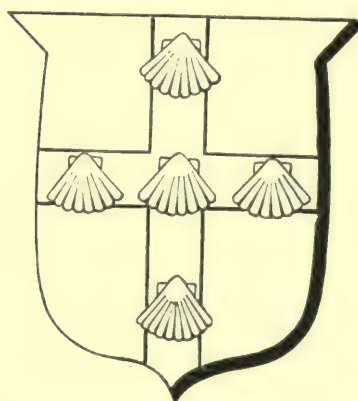
The grant of the Barony of La Roche to Sir Walter Bentley is also referred to in Sir Francis Palgrave's *Antient Kalendars and Inventories of the Treasury of His Majesty's Exchequer*, vol. i., p. 197.

Appendix (C)

The Inquisitiones post-mortem for 1359 were not issued in the Records series when this went to press, or possibly some further details might be forthcoming therein.

By a curious coincidence the armorial bearings of Sir Walter Bentley (a silver shield, with a scarlet ["gules "] chevron) were similar to those borne, four centuries later, by Admiral Sir John Bentley.

HANGEST



Some Authorities Consulted

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<i>Dom. Gui Alexis Lobineau</i>	<i>Histoire de Bretagne.</i>
<i>Pierre Hyacinthe Morice</i>	<i>Histoire de Bretagne.</i>
<i>Canon Pierre le Baud</i>	<i>Histoire de Bretagne.</i>
<i>Arthur le Moÿne de la Borderie</i>	<i>Histoire de Bretagne.</i>
<i>P. A. N. B. Daru</i>	<i>Histoire de Bretagne.</i>
<i>Pierre d'Hozier (Baud)</i>	<i>Histoire de Bretagne.</i>
<i>L'Abbé F. G. P. B. Manet</i>	<i>Histoire de la Petite Bretagne.</i>
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<i>Auguste et Émile Molinier</i>	<i>Chronique Normande.</i>
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<i>Thomas Rymer</i>	<i>Fœdera.</i>
<i>Geoffrey Baker</i>	<i>Chronicle.</i>
<i>Robert of Avesbury</i>	<i>Chronicle.</i>
<i>Thomas Walsingham</i>	<i>Chronicle.</i>
<i>Raphael Holinshed</i>	<i>Chronicle.</i>
<i>Jehan le Bel</i>	<i>Chronique.</i>
<i>A. Lefranc</i>	<i>Chronique.</i>
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<i>John Capgrave</i>	<i>Chronicle.</i>
<i>Henry Knyghton</i>	<i>Chronicle.</i>
<i>John of Reading</i>	<i>Chronicle.</i>
<i>John Stow</i>	<i>Chronicle.</i>

Guillaume

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<i>Thomas Carte</i>	<i>History of England.</i>
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<i>Professor Thomas Frederick Tout</i>	in <i>The English Historical Review.</i>
<i>Dr. Louis Moréri</i>	<i>Le Grand Dictionnaire.</i>
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<i>B. L. Henri Martin</i>	<i>Histoire de France.</i>
<i>F. Eudes de Mezeray</i>	<i>Histoire de France.</i>
<i>Dr. Joshua Barnes</i>	<i>Life of Edward III.</i>
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<i>William Longman</i>	<i>Life of Edward III.</i>
<i>Émile Pehaut</i>	<i>Jeanne de Belleville.</i>
<i>Alexandre Mazas</i>	<i>Vies des Grands Capitaines.</i>
<i>La Fontenelle de Vaudoré</i>	<i>Olivier de Glisson.</i>
<i>Siméon Luce</i>	<i>Life of Bertrand du Guesclin.</i>
<i>Guyard de Berville</i>	<i>Histoire de Bertrand du Guesclin.</i>

Index I

INDEX I

OF THE NAMES OF PERSONS MENTIONED IN THIS VOLUME

- ADDISON, Joseph, 29
 Aigle, Sieur de, 33
 Amaneuus of Cheshunt, 18
 d'Angle, Sir G., 17
 Anjou, Seneschal of, 31
 Anselme, P., 56, 60
 Argentré, B., 8, 59
 Argeville, Lord C., 32
 Auffremont. See de Nesle
 Avesbury, Robert, 45, 59
 Avesnel, Lady, 43
 Avesnel, Sir John, vi, 43, 44, 47

 Baker, Geoffrey, 27, 59
 Bardi, The, 19
 Barnes, Dr. J., 10, 16, 36, 60
 Bateman, Bishop, 42
 Baud, P. le, 59
 Bazaine, Maréchal, 24
 Beauchamp, Sir John, 13, 14, 41, 44, 54
 Beaujeu, Maréchal (Sen.), 37
 Beaujeu, Maréchal (Jun.), 37
 Beaumanoir, Seigneur de, 6, 7, 22, 29, 34
 Beauvoir, de. See Cahors
 Bel, le, J., 59
 Belleville, Maurice, S. de, 51
 Belleville. See Jeanne of Clisson
 Bemborough, Sir R. (alias Green-acre), 6
 Benevente, Seneschal of, 31
 Bentley, Admiral Sir John, 57
 Bentley, Family of, 53, 55
 Bentley, Geoffrey, 47
 Bentley, Joan (Lady), 47
 Bentley, Lady. See Jeanne of Clisson
 Bentley, (Sir) John, 38, 53
 Bentley, Sir Richard, 38
 Bentley, Sir Thomas, 47, 53
 BENTLEY, SIR WALTER, v, vi, vii, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23, (24), 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 36, 38, (39), 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57
 Bertram, Maréchal, 7, 32
 Bertram, son of the above, 32
 Bertrand. See preceding entry
 Berville, G. de, 60
 Blois, Charles of, v, 5, 9, 22, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 54, 56
 Blois, John of, 39
 Bohun. See Northampton
 Borderie, de la, 34, 59
 Boutell, Rev. C., 3
 Bouville, Blanche de, 51
 Briquebec, Lord of, 29, 30, 32
 Briquebec, Marshal, 32
 Brittany, Dukes of, 1, 2
 Brou (Bause, or Bruse), Sir John, 34
 Bruce, King Robert, 43
 Bruyères, Sieur, 15
 Bruyères, Jeanne, 15
 Buckingham, John de, vi

 Cadoudal, G. de, 25
 Cahors, Ralph of, 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 33, 34, 40, 54

Index I

- Calveley, Sir Hugh, v, 9, 43, 47
 Campbell, Lord, 40
 Canterbury, Archbishop Stratford, v, 19, 40, 53
 Canterbury, Archbishop Ufford, 19
 Canterbury, Archbishop Bradwardine, 19
 Capgrave, John, 59
 Carte, Thomas, 60
 Castro, Inez de, 42
 Charette, General, 56
 Charles VII., 32
 Chastelet, Sieur de, 33
 Chateaubriant, Geoffrey, 51
 Châtel, Tanguy du (or de Castro), 25, 28, 53, 56
 Cheshunt, Sir A. de, 18
 Clermont, Family of, 15
 Clisson, Jeanne of (Lady Bentley), v, vii, 2, 3, 4, 37, (44) 45, 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 60
 Clisson, The Sieur de, v, 2, 5, 51
 Clisson, Olivier, the younger, 3, 47, 51, 52, 54, 60
 Clisson, Guillaume de, 3, 51, 52
 Clisson, Jeanne, the younger, 51
 Clisson, Isabeau de, 37, 51
 Clisson, Amauri de, 52, 55
 Clive, Lord, 43
 Clytemnestra, 52
 Coëtmen (Comaine), Vicomte de, 32
 Coeyghem, Lord G., 32
 Courtenai, Lord of, 33
 Croquart, Captain, 10
 Crusaders, The, 1
 Cumberland, High Sheriff of, 44
 Cusance, Henri, 46
 Cusance, Pierre, 46
 Cusance, William, 46
 Dagworth, Sir Thomas, v, vi, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 33, 34, 54
 Dagworth, Lady Eleanor, vi, 5
 Dagworth, Sir Nicholas, 6
 d'Albret, Seigneur, 14
 d'Amboise, Seigneur de, 15
 Daru, P., 59
 David, Roger, 29
 d'Endreghem, Maréchal, 7, 13, 16, 48
 Derval, Seigneur de, 22, 29
 Despencer, Bishop, 8
 Despencer, Edward, 8
 Drayton, Michael, 15
 Dryden, John, 25
 Dutch, The, 56
 Edward I., 55
 Edward III., iii, v, vi, vii, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, (12), 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, (26), 29, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 52, 53, 54, 56, 59, 60
 Edward "the Black Prince," 7, 9, 17
 Elizabeth, Queen, 35
 Ely, Bishop (de Lisle), 42
 England, Chief Justice of, 41
 Flanders. See Jeanne, Countess of Montfort
 Flemings, The, 56
 Foxe, John, 60
 France, Queen Jeanne of, 19
 French, The, v, 2, 4, 8, 9, 14, 17, 27, 30, 35, 54
 Frere, Lord John, 31
 Frescobaldi, The, 19
 Froissart, Jehan, 10, 15, 59
 Fuller, Thomas, 53
 Garter, Knights of the, 17, 30
 Gatesden, Dr. John, 53
 Gatesden, Governor, 53
 Giles (St.), Beverley, 38
 Goanes, G. de, 34
 Gould, Rev. S. B., 34, 35
 Gray (Grez), Sir G. de, 34
 Grose, Francis, 15
 Guesclin, Bertrand de, ii, 7, 10, 17, 34, 60
 Hambie, Paniel de, 27, 29
 Hamley, General, 13
 Hangest, Maréchal de, 7, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 36, 37, 58
 Harcourt, Jean de, 33
 Haspedane, Jean, 51
 Hastings, Warren, 43

Index I

- Henry II., 1
 Henry III., 14
 Henry VII., 9
 Henry. See Duke of Lancaster
 Herle, Sir Robert, vi
 Hoche, General, 5
 Holand, Sir Thomas. See Kent
 Holinshed, Raphael, 19, 59
 Hook, Dean, 40
 d'Hozier, P., 59
 Huntingdon, Earl of. See d'Angle

 Incher (Inchy), Lord, 32
 Isabella, Queen of England, v

 James, William, 56
 Joan, Princess (daughter of Edward III.), 19
 John (St.), of Beverley, 55
 John of Blois, 39
 John of Ghent, 7
 John of Reading, 59
 John, King of France, 9, (12), (13), 15, 17, 21, 27, 30, 34, 35, 41
 John, his Queen, 19
 Johnes, Thomas, 59

 Kent, The Earl of, vi, 47
 Kergolai, Jean de, 22
 Knolles, Sir Robert, 9, 17, 25, 47
 Knyghton, Henry, 52, 59

 La Cerda, L. de, 7, 11
 La Muce, Lord John, 32
 Lancaster, Duke of, vi, 4, 7, 46, 55
 La Roche Moisan. See Sir Walter Bentley
 Latymer, Lord, vi, 43
 Launay, Lord William, 32
 Laval, de, Jean, 32, 33
 Laval, de, Gui, 33
 Laval, de, Guillaume, 34
 Le Bel, J., 59
 Le franc, A., 52, 59
 Leon, Sieur du, 29
 L'Estrange, Hamon, 3
 Levot, P. J., 59
 Ligucl, Lord of, 45
 Lincoln, Bishop of, vi

 Lobineau, Alexis, 59
 London, City of, 37
 London, Mayor of, 42
 London, Sheriffs of, 19
 (See also the following Index.)
 Longman, William, 60
 Louis-le-Grand, 42
 Luce, Simeon, 60

 Mackinnon, Sir James, 25, 60
 Maignelais, Lord T. de, 32
 Malcis. See the entry above
 Malestroit, Lord of, 32, 33
 Malestroit, the previous Lord, 33
 "Mandeville, Sir J.," 41
 Manet, l'Abbé, 26, 59
 Manny, Sir Walter, 2, 6, 7
 Marche, Lord William de la, 22, 32
 Mareuil. See de Trie
 Margaret, The Princess, 39
 Marlborough, Duke of, 3
 Martin, Henri, 60
 Maynard, John, 37
 Mazas, Alexandre, 8, 60
 Mello. See de Nesle
 Melun, Comte de, 9
 Mezeray, Eudes de, 60
 Michelet, Jules, 34
 Molinier, Auguste, 59
 Molinier, Emile, 59
 Montaigne, M. de, 21
 Montauban, Lord of, 22, 32
 Montauban, Lord Reginald of, 32
 Montbouchier, Lord A., 32
 Mont de Bayeux, Lord of, 33
 Montfort, Count of, 1, 28
 Montfort, Countess, 2, 28, 52
 Montfort, Count and Countess, their Son, 52
 Montfort, Simon de, iv, 14
 Moors, The, 42
 Moreri, Dr. L., 60
 Morice, P. H., 12, 32, 59
 Morlaix, Sir Tristram de, 34
 Morley, Admiral Lord, 44
 Muce. See La Muce
 Mussidan, Seigneur de, 14

 Nangis, G. de, 60
 Napoleon I., 32
 Nelson, Admiral, 16

Index I

- Nesle, Maréchal de, viii, 7, (8),
 (13), 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24,
 (25), 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 37, 54
 Nesle, Lord William, 16, 22
 Neweton, Simon, 44
 Nicholas, Sir Harris, vi, 11
 Norris, Sir John, 35
 Northampton (Bohun), Earl of, vi,
 2, 7, 47

 Offemont. See de Nesle
 Ogée, Jean, 59
 Ormonde. See Lady Dagworth

 Palgrave, Sir F., 56
 Parthenay, L. de, 51
 Paz, du, A., 59
 Pehaut, Emile, 60
 Penthièvre Family, 32
 Peruzzi, The, 19
 Philip, King of France, 2, (4), (7),
 (12), 51
 Philippa, Queen of England, 39
 Plantagenets, The, 19, 35, 40
 Pluscallet, T. de, 28
 Pole Family, 19
 Polo, Marco, 41
 Pons, R. de, 16
 Pontcallet. See Pluscallet
 Pope, The, 42
 Pulteney Family, 19

 Quenecan, S. de, 22
 Quintin, Lord of, 29, 31, 33
 Quintin, his predecessor, 33

 Raguenel, Lord Robert, 32
 Raikes, Colonel, 37
 Ralph. See Cahors
 Reading, John of, 59
 Richard II., 9, 17
 Rienzi, N. de, 41
 Rieux, Sieur de, 22, 37
 Rochefort, Sieur de, 29
 Rohan, Vicomte de, 10, 22, 29,
 31, 33, 56
 Rohan, Vicomtesse de, 29
 Rohan, the previous Vicomte, 33
 Rouen, Seneschal of, 33
 Rouge, B. de (Derval), 22, 29
 Rouge, V. de, 22

 Rougemont, Lord of, 33
 Rous, Edmond, 16
 Rymer, Thomas, 4, 52, 59

 Saintré, J. de, 17
 Saint Sauveur (Dinan), 10
 Scholastica, St., 42
 Scotland, King of (David), 41
 Scots, The, v
 Scott, Sir S. D., 11, 19
 Sébillot, Yves, 33
 Sismondi, J. C. L. S., 34
 Sorel, Agnes, 32
 Speed, John, 25, 60
 Spencer. See Despencer
 Stanhope, Earl, 36
 Star, Knights of the, 30, 37, 54, 68
 Stow, John, 32, 33, 34, 45, 59
 Stratford, Archbishop, v, (19), 40,
 53
 Stubbs, Bishop, 40

 Thoresby, Archbishop, 33, 47
 Thorpe, Chief Justice, 41
 Thoüars, Isabel, 15
 Thoüars, Vicomte, 15
 Timbs, John, 43
 Tinteniach, Lord of, 22, 32, 33
 Tournemine, Sieur de, 22
 Tout, Professor, 34, 60
 Tremouille Family, 56
 Tresiguidi, I. de, 25
 Trie, R. de, 27
 Turks, The, 42
 Tyler, Wat, 9

 Vaudoré, F. de, 6, 60
 Venetians, The, 56
 Verney Family, 21
 Vielchastel, Lord William of, 32
 Vienne, J. de, 41
 Villebon, Lord of, 33
 Villiers, P. de, 34

 Walsingham, Thomas, 8, 59
 Warter, Prior of, 38
 Wellington, Duke of, 36
 Worcester. See York (Thoresby)

 York, Archbishop of (Thoresby),
 33

Index II

INDEX II

OF THE NAMES OF PLACES MENTIONED IN THIS VOLUME

- ACQUITAINE, 1
 Africa, 1
 Agincourt, 14, 15, 35
 Aigle, 33
 Alençon, 33
 Ambic, 29
 Ampant, 56
 America, 1
 Angoulême, 13
 Angoumois, 13
 Anjou, 21, 31
 Artois, 15
 Atlantic Ocean, (2, 4), 46, 54, 56
 Auray, v, 5, 54
 Australia, 1
 Avesbury, 59
 Avignon, 42

 Barre, La, 56
 Bay, The, 4, 55, 56
 Baye, La, 56
 Beaubri, 45, 56
 Beauvoir, 56
 Belleville, 3, 45, 51, 60
 Benevente, 31
 Bentley, 38, 55
 Beverley, 3, 33, 38, 42, 47, 53, 55
 Bishops' Burton, 55
 Blavet, River, 45
 Blein (or Blengi), 17, 45, 52, 55
 Blois, v, 5, 9, 39
 Boign, 55
 Bordeaux, 2, 4, 5, 13, 14, 52, 55
 Borthelby, 55
 Boulonnais, 15

 Bourgneuf, 4, 56
 Brembili (Mauron), 26
 Brest, v, 2, 9, 20, 23, 28, 37, 53
 Bretigni, v
 Briquebec, 32
 Brittany, vi, vii, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7,
 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 20, 22, 23,
 29, 33, 35, 37, 39, 42, 43, 44,
 (45), 46, 47, 51, 53, 54, 55, 59
 Brittany, *Guide to*, 34, 35
 Broroc (or Bruc), 45, 56

 Cadsant, Isle of, v
 Cahors, 3
 Calais, v, 13, 41
 Canterbury, v, 19, 40, 53
 Castelneuf, 56
 Charente, The, 13
 Château Gonthier, 17
 Chauve, 55
 Cheshunt, 18
 Cinque Ports. See Sandwich
 Clisson, v, 2, 3, 4, 45, 51, 52, 53,
 55
 Cognac district, 14
 Colet Castle. See Pont Calet
 Cotentin, The, 32
 Cottingham Castle, 55
 Coventry, 42
 Creçy, v, 14, 26, 34, 35
 Cumberland, 44

 Derby, vi
 Derbyshire, 53
 Derien. See La Roche

Index II

- Dinan, 10
 Dordogne, 13
 Durham, v

 Edinburgh, v
 Elven, 9
 Ely, 42
 England, 1, 6, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20,
 30, 33, 34, (35), 38, 44, 46, 47,
 54
 England (Western), 20
 Esvre, River, 45
 Europe, 18, 41, 42, 55

 Flanders, 6, 19, 21
 Fonnay-s-Charente, 16
 Fougerey, 17
 Fougères, 8, 20, 24, 54
 France, 1, 2, 6, 10, 15, 18, 19, 20,
 21, 23, 30, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43,
 45, 46, 47, 53

 Gascony, 2, 12, 13 (14), (59)
 Genoa, 12, (26)
 Germany (Southern), 41
 Ghent, 7
 Gironde (The), 52
 Groix, Île, 46, 54, 56
 Guienne, v
 Guildford, iii

 Halidon Hill, v
 Haltemprise, 55
 Hambie, 29
 Helléan. See La Croix
 Hennebont, v, 2, 28, 45, 52, 55
 Her (ruins), 56
 Hertford, 7
 Hertfordshire, 53
 Holland, 42
 Humber, River, 53
 Hungary, 42
 Huntingdon, 17

 Inchy (in Artois), 32
 India, 1
 Ireland, 1
 Italy, 19

 Japan, 41
 Josselin, 47

 Kemenethly, 45, 56
 Kent, vi

 La Croix Helléan, 32
 Lancaster, vi
 Lannion, 51
 Lanvaux, The, 9
 La Roche Derien, v, 28, 52, 55
 La Roche Moisan, 46, 54, 55, 56
 Le Duc (Lac), 24
 Leicester, vi
 Liguel, 45, 56
 Limousin, 13
 Lincoln, vi
 "Little Britain," 2
 Loire, River, 13, 51, 56
 London, 2, 18, 19, 37, 39, 42, 43,
 51, 54
 London, Aldersgate Street, 2
 London, Little Britain, 2
 London, Park Lane, 2
 London, Tower of, 19, 40, 41,
 42, 43, 44, 54
 London, Westminster, v, 40, 53
 l'Orient, 56
 "Low Countries," The, 1
 Luttrington, 38, 55

 Maine, 21
 Malestroit, 4, 9
 Maupertuis. See Poitiers
 Mauron, i, iii, v, vii, 8, 9, 14, 17,
 24, 28, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39,
 43, 45, 46, 54, 59
 Mediolanum, 14
 Melun, 9
 Metz, 24
 Mi-Voie (v), 6, (9, 10, 32), 34
 Moisan. See La Roche
 Montfort, 1, 3
 Montmuran, v, 43
 Morbihan, 56
 Morlaix, v, 2, 52
 Motte Broon, 10

 Nangis, 59
 Nantes, v, 2, 17, 51, 55
 "Narrow Seas," The, 12
 Nesle, 15
 Nevill's Cross, v
 Nile, Battle of the, 16

Index II

- Noirmoutiers, Isle of, 4, 53, 55, 56
 Norfolk, 16
 Normandy, 13, 21, 29, (59)
 Northampton, vi
 Norwich, 8, 19

 Orient, The, 21
 Ormonde, vi, 5
 Oxford, 42

 Palestine, 1
 Paris, 2, 11, (34), (37), 51
 Parthenay, 51
 Perigord, 13
 Péronne, 15
 Picardy, 15
 Plymouth, v
 Plœrmel, 6, 8, 9, 10, 23, 24, 25,
 46, 53, 54, 56
 Poitiers, v, 9, 14, 16, 17, 22, 32, 35
 Poitou, 2, 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 14, 21,
 51, 54, 55
 Pont Callet, 45, 54, 56
 Pontivy, 45
 Portsmouth, v
 Portugal, 42
 Pount Callec. See Pont Callet

 Questynt, 45, 56

 Reading, 59
 Redon, 17
 Rennes, v, 8, 17, 23, 31, 46, 51
 Richmond, 9
 Rochefort, 13
 Rome, 42
 Rouen, 19, 33

 Saintes, i, iii, iv, v, vii, 8, 13, 14,
 16, 17, 54
 Saintonge, 12, 13, 15, 17, 21
 Sandwich, 7
 Scotland, 1, 6, 14, 18, 42, 53
 Seine, River, 39
 Seton, 47
 Sluis, v, 11, 19
 Southampton, v
 Spain, 5, 12, 15, 17, (35), 42, (45)
 St. George la Valade, 16
 St. Jean d'Angely, 13, 14, 16
 Staffordshire, 53
 Switzerland, 41

 Taillebourg, 16, 54
 Touraine, 21, 54
 Tournai, v
 Tours, 45, 56
 Tristan, Île, 39, 43

 Valade. See St. George
 Valognes, 32
 Vannes, v, vii, 8, 17, 53
 Varades, 17
 Vendée, La, 56
 Villemain Forest, 56

 Wales, 18, (29)
 Wales, South, 14
 Warter Priory, 38
 Westminster, v, 40, 53
 Wight, Isle of, 53
 Winchelsea, v, 7, 12
 Worcester, 33

 Yarmouth, Great, 21
 York, 33
 Yorkshire, (3), (25), 38, 44, 46,
 47, 53, 55
 Yvel, River, 26





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